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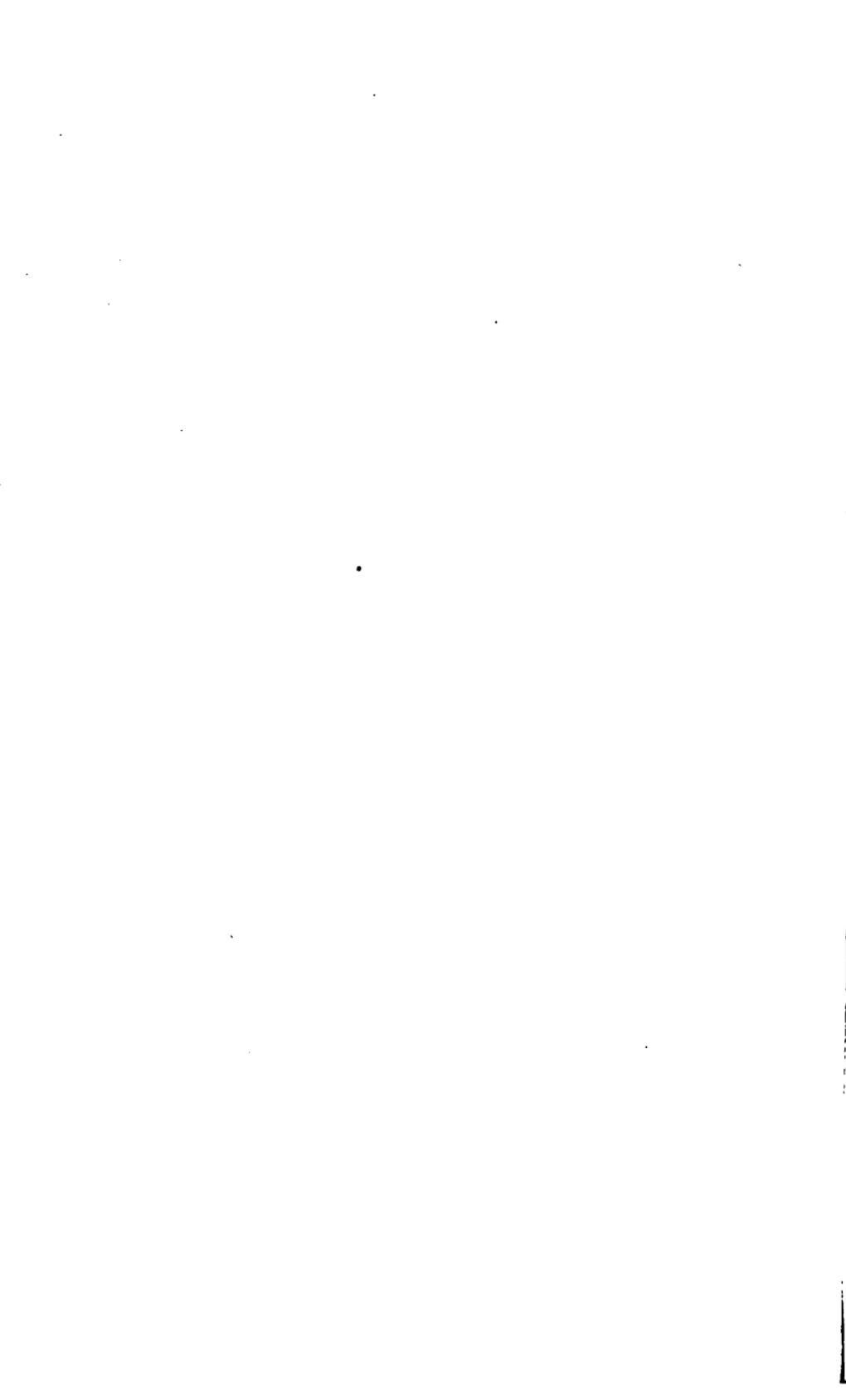
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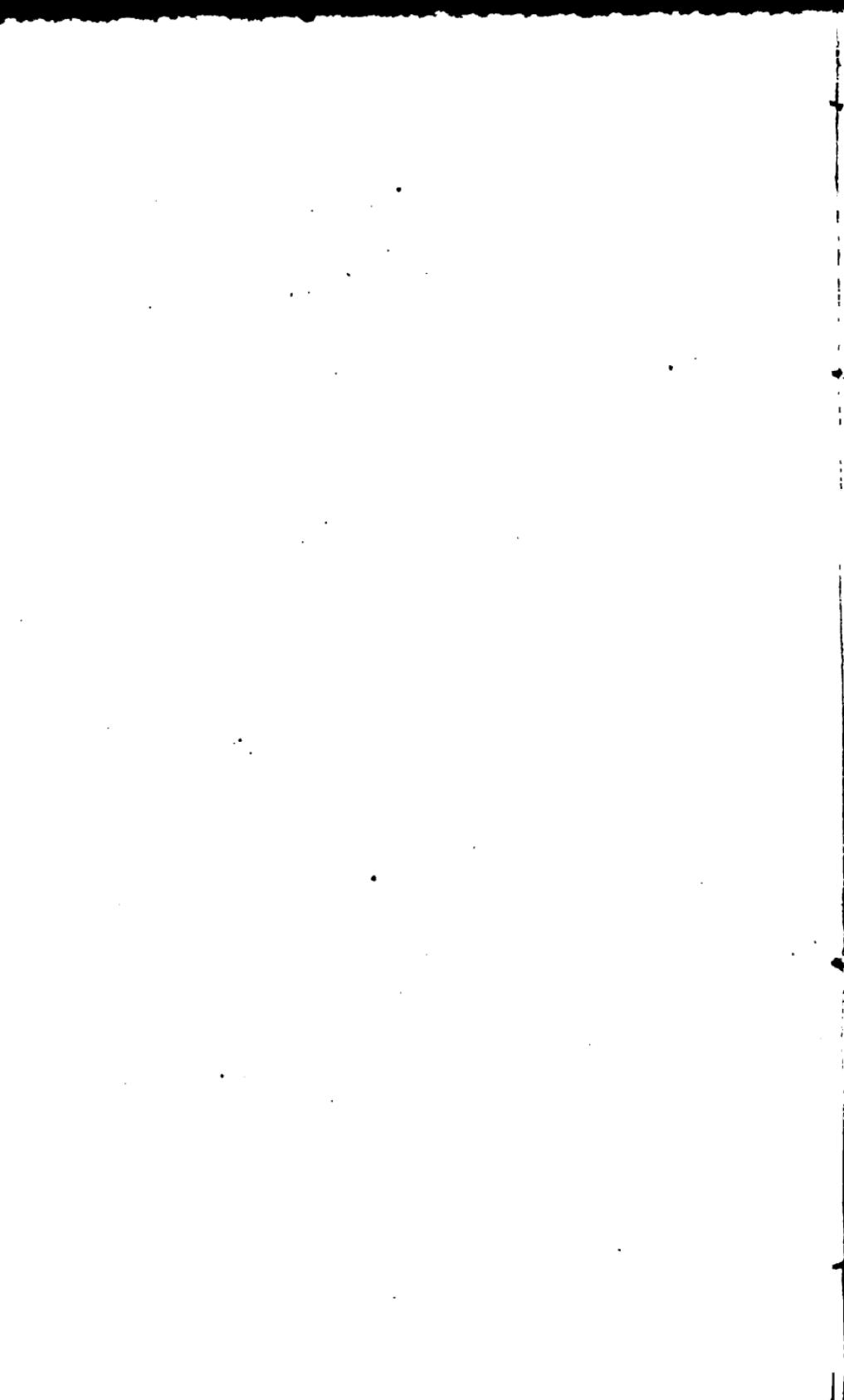
Wm. Walker



CONFIDENCE

A Tale.

VOL. II.



C O N F I D E N C E

A Tale.

BY

ELIZABETH AMELIA GEE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON

SAUNDERS & OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1853.

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CONFIDENCE.

CHAPTER I.

“ THERE are many highly respectable gentlemen in London, some of them of your own profession, to whom I can refer you, both to prove my respectability, and also the truth of what I am about to relate. You are quite welcome to take notes. I see you are prepared to do so.”

“ Ay, ay,” muttered Mr. Howell, “ I intend to do so, whether with your leave or without it.”

“ You have not been misinformed as to my family name,” pursued Wildner: “ it was Selby.”

“ One admission of the truth of what I had already heard,” muttered Mr. Howell, as he wrote it down. “ Do you hear, Sophia Harding?” addressing his ward, who was standing with Eugenia at the window.

"I was already fully aware of that fact, sir," replied Sophia, calmly.

Wildner continued:—

"I early lost my parents. My father was a merchant: you may have heard of the firm of Selby and Etheridge?"

"Ay, ay," muttered Mr. Howell; "and you ruined poor Etheridge, who died of a broken heart."

"On the contrary, sir," replied Wildner, smiling, "Mr. Etheridge is still alive, and in good health, or was so a few weeks ago. Mr. Etheridge was under considerable obligations to my father, who had raised him from the situation of managing clerk to be a partner, when his own health obliged him to be much away from his business. Etheridge, consequently, had no capital, and, on condition that I should be received into the firm as a partner on coming of age, my father left all his money in the firm, and, accordingly, at one-and-twenty, I became partner with Mr. Etheridge, with a full share in the profits. But shortly after this event had taken place, I unfortunately for myself married; it was, I must acknowledge, a hasty and inconsiderate marriage, and I paid dearly for my want of forethought."

"Ay, ay," muttered the old man, "and

who, when you was tired of her, you sent to America with one of your clerks; but that's a part I can't understand: why you should have followed them, and shot the poor devil you sent her out with."

"Simply, sir," replied Wildner, "because I did not send her out to America. She and the clerk, who for his quiet and gentlemanly manners I had admitted to my table on a much more familiar footing than the etiquette of mercantile life usually permits between the principal and one of the subordinates, eloped, after having forged my name to numerous bills, and drawn out a large sum of money from our bankers."

"That was all fudge; you know you drew those bills yourself."

"If such had been the case," replied Wildner, calmly, "I should, of course, have accompanied my wife to America: at least I certainly should not have entrusted her and the money to the care of another. However, to proceed:— The abstraction of so large a sum as they had taken with them, crippled our resources, so that we were obliged to submit to a fiat in bankruptcy, though well able, even if we had never recovered that money, to pay all our creditors twenty shillings in the pound."

"Ay, ay, all very fine; who ever heard of

people going into the 'Gazette' when they could pay twenty shillings in the pound?"

"It is very evident that you know very little of mercantile affairs, Mr. Howell," replied Wildner, without the slightest excitement either of voice or manner, for his passion had wholly subsided, and though Mr. Howell's remarks and constant interruptions were extremely annoying, they had not the power of rousing his temper again; "it is a measure often unfortunately obliged to be taken to enable the debts owing to a firm to be drawn in, as well as to ascertain all to which they are liable; but a dissertation on the various motives for submitting to the disgrace of having one's name in the 'Gazette' has nothing to do with the subject we are upon; I will therefore proceed:—

"Mr. Etheridge being an elderly man whose eyesight was not particularly good, and whose perceptions were, doubtless, somewhat blunted with age, seeing the checks, instantly declared them to be in my handwriting, and, consequently, no forgeries, and, doubtless, it was this declaration that engendered the report that I had been a consenting party to my wife's elopement. This, added to the disgrace already entailed upon me by my wife's conduct, almost drove me mad. Fortunately for me, among my friends there

was an intelligent lawyer, who suggested our instantly starting for New York, whither we had discovered that the fugitives had fled. We accordingly sailed in the packet—a remarkably fast sailer—and having had an excellent passage, arrived a few hours before the vessel in which they had taken their passage. I have reason to suspect that, as their ship came into harbour, my wife saw me on the pier, and she and her companion instantly got on shore, and escaped; but the Custom-house officers would not allow them to remove any of their luggage, and the money was all, except a trifling sum, in their trunks. We had taken with us a police-officer armed with all the power the law could give us; and, therefore, instantly obtained a search-warrant, and got possession of nearly all the money with which they had decamped. I rejoiced much at this circumstance, and should have returned to England without making any further inquiry after the fugitives, having no wish to be the cause of a fellow-creature's suffering a perhaps ignominious death."

"And yet, spite of your pretended philanthropy," growled Mr. Howell, "you shot that very man: thus taking the law into your own hands."

"It was in self-defence," replied Wildner.

“ We were about to return to England. We had taken our passage; and my friend the lawyer and myself were going down, late in the evening, to the ship, which was to sail at daylight; I was attacked by some ruffians with bludgeons and knives. Having received a severe blow, and also a slight wound, I fired one of a pair of small pocket-pistols, which the police-officer had advised me never to be without, and wounded a man who proved to be the leader of the party, for the instant he fell, the others all ran away. On examining the wounded man, it proved to be Johnson, the seducer and companion of my unfortunate wife. Being accompanied only by my friend, the lawyer, and the man being apparently desperately wounded, we did not think it worth while to give him into custody, especially as I was most anxious to return to England in time to have the bankruptcy annulled. If this can be called murder, I certainly am a murderer if the man died; but of this I am not certain: and my conscience tells me that the shooting of a man in self-defence, is not a crime of a very deep dye.

“ The bankruptcy was superseded, and the firm of Etheridge and Selby might have continued to this day in undiminished credit; but I was so disgusted at the cruel injustice of my

partner's conduct, and especially the false accusation of my being a consenting party to my wife's elopement, which I found to be the subject of general belief on my return, that I insisted upon an immediate dissolution of the partnership.

" You accused me of having caused the ruin of my partner, but you have only to inquire, and you will find the house of Etheridge in as good credit as ever.

" I had no difficulty in obtaining my divorce, having easily obtained proof that my wife had, during the voyage, assumed the name of Mrs. Johnson, and been considered by every person on board as the wife of the person by whom she was accompanied.

" With regard to my change of name, which you have chosen to accuse me of having assumed to conceal my true one, I can only say, that it was in compliance with the will of my maternal uncle, made years before these unfortunate events took place: he had no immediate heirs of his own name, and, in leaving me his property, he attached to it the condition that I should take his. Had you, Mr. Howell, taken the trouble of inquiring, some of your friends in London would, doubtless, have been able to have sent you the newspapers of the day, in which you would have found the particulars of the whole

affair: for there was no concealment attempted. The assumption of my uncle's name received her Majesty's sanction, as announced in the 'Gazette,' as also the dissolution of partnership, and the divorce, as publicly sanctioned by an Act of Parliament.

" You have also, sir, accused me of poverty, insinuating that my only motive in seeking the hand of Miss Harding is to obtain possession of her property; to prove to you, sir, that I have no such motive, I am perfectly willing that the whole of her property shall be settled upon herself and children, if there should be any; and I will add another 10,000*l.*, making the sum so settled—over which I will not have the slightest control—30,000*l.*"

" All very fine! all very fine!" exclaimed Mr. Howell, impatiently, who felt that he was in the wrong, yet was too obstinate to yield or acknowledge himself convinced of the truth of Wildner's statement. " A very well got-up story—here and there a bit of truth, mixed up with a great deal of falsehood. The referees you talk of, I'll be bound, I should find all men of straw; and I should get laughed at for making any inquiries after them, so you may save yourself the trouble of telling me their names. Sophia wants a year and a half or better before she's one-and-twenty,

and so long, my fine fellow, you shall wait for her; and I'll take precious good care you shan't see too much of her during that time."

Wildner was about to reply, but Sophia advanced from the window at which she had been standing with Eugenia, and laying her hand upon his arm, said—

"As my guardian does not seem disposed to yield to our wishes, we will not lose any more time in arguing the point with him. But there is one thing which I had almost forgotten; before I go, I demand to see the copy of my father's will, which I know, Mr. Howell, is in your possession."

This demand was made in consequence of a communication she had just received from Eugenia, though she did not choose Mr. Howell to suppose it was a thought of the moment.

During her ride to Llanmichael, the object of their journey very naturally became the subject of conversation between her and Mrs. Roberts, when the latter, who, it seems, had been one of the witnesses to the late Colonel Harding's will, in rummaging her memory for some facts concerning the manner in which it had been worded, said, that she was almost certain that at the age of eighteen, Miss Harding became at liberty to marry whom she pleased, provided her

property was settled to the satisfaction of either of her guardians, or if neither would give their consent, still she might marry, provided the whole of her property was settled upon herself and children, so that her husband should not derive the slightest benefit from it, except through his wife; nor had she even the power of giving him more than just the quarter's dividends [as she received it.

This was a most important point, for, if true, all difficulties in the way of their immediate marriage were instantly got rid of, for Wildner had already offered to make the required settlements, so that Mr. Howell's consent was, in fact, immaterial; but they must see the will to ascertain whether it was in reality as Mrs. Roberts had stated.

Mr. Howell was perfectly aware of this clause, as also that Sophia's guardian in London possessed equal power with himself; it therefore was just the last thing he would allow—their seeing the will. He knew that he had a copy in his possession, but how was he to avoid showing it? Hitherto, whatever he had chosen to tell Sophia she had, without a question, believed; but he had found her to-day in a very different humour: he scarce knew, therefore, what subter-

fuge to employ. To gain time for thought, he replied—

“ You mistake, young lady, I have not your father’s will; that is lodged in the proper office, in Doctors’ Commons.

Indignant at his attempt to treat her thus still as a child, Sophia replied—

“ I am perfectly aware of that, sir; nor did I ask to see the original will, but the copy which I know you have, or had, in your possession.”

The alternative suggested to Mr. Howell’s cunning mind another mode by which he could deceive Sophia, and avoid producing the important document.

“ Ay, ay, child,” replied he, “ so I had, I acknowledge, but I am not quite certain that I still have it in my possession, for it is sometimes necessary, when there is money to be bought into the funds, to produce the will to prove my authority; so that I may have sent it to London and not yet received it back, but I’ll set Owen to search for it. I need not, however, detain you and your friends; I suppose you are not going out of town just yet. I will send him to you at the Plough, where, I suppose, you are stopping.”

Wildner smiled, for he knew that there was no

truth in what Mr. Howell had asserted, and that he was not likely to have parted with the copy of the will for any purpose whatever; but Sophia, though she knew not the falsehood of his assertion, yet felt convinced, from his eagerness to dismiss herself and friends, that it was not his intention to allow her to see her father's will, and this confirmed her belief that it contained the clause of which Mrs. Roberts had spoken; she, therefore, with an air of firmness and determination, of which her guardian had believed her incapable, replied—

“I shall not leave this room until I have seen the copy of my father's will.”

Excessively annoyed at her pertinacity, Mr. Howell exclaimed, angrily—

“But, if I have not got it, I cannot show it to you; but since you are so obstinate, you may sit down and wait while Owen is looking for it.”

He tingled a small silver bell, which stood on the table beside him, and a tall, red-haired young man, with a vulgar and disagreeably cunning expression of countenance, entered the room.

“Did you ring, father?” demanded he, with a sheepish air, and looking sidelong at Sophia and Eugenia instead of towards the person he addressed.

“Yes, Owen,” replied Mr. Howell; “Miss

Harding wants to see her father's will. I don't exactly remember whether I have it here or not, but while I am just jotting down the places you are to look in for it, you can ask after her health, and pay her the usual compliments, as a young man and an old friend ought to do."

As Owen advanced with a half-sheepish, half-impudent air towards Sophia, Wildner could scarcely restrain his indignation at the impudent familiarity with which he addressed her; she however, replied so gravely and so coldly, that the young man felt annoyed, and blushed deeply with mingled shame and anger.

Eugenia, though she disliked him extremely, yet, in the kindness of her gentle nature, pitied his confusion, and answered his inquiries after her health, and that of her father and cousin, with more kindness than she would have done had Sophia treated him more kindly. Owen, like most vulgar-minded people, imputed the kindness of her manner to admiration of himself, and, instantly throwing off all restraint, answered her in a strain which called the blood into her cheeks. Mr. Howell, however, who had no wish that he should pay attention to any one but Sophia, quickly relieved her of his presence, by calling him to his side, and giving him the sheet of paper on which he had been writing, saying—

"If you do not find the copy of the will in any of these places, I must have sent it to London."

The young man bowed and left the room. After what he considered a sufficient time had elapsed to have enabled him to search for the document, which, of course, he had never troubled himself to look for—the paper which his father had given him having directed him to make some excuse for not producing it—his father's observation, that he might probably have sent it to London, was a hint to him of which he took advantage, saying, as he re-entered the room—

"I cannot find the copy of Colonel Harding's will, sir; and I think I remember your having sent it to Mr. Armstrong with some other papers relative to Miss Harding's property."

Scarcely were the words uttered, when a gleam of satisfaction beamed on Wildner's countenance, and, pressing Sophia's hand—for she had refused to take a seat in obedience to her guardian's bidding, and was standing by Wildner, with her hand resting on his arm—he said, carelessly—

"Is that Mr. George Armstrong, of Stone's buildings? and pray what has he to do with Miss Harding's property?"

Mr. Howell was taken by surprise, and without for a moment suspecting that Wildner had

any particular motive for asking the question, replied :

“ Mr. Armstrong is Miss Harding’s guardian as well as myself.” Then perceiving the evident satisfaction which this information gave Wildner, he added, “ but his power is limited to the management of her funded property.”

Wildner, however, was not deceived, he knew that where two guardians were appointed they generally possessed equal power over their ward; therefore again pressing Sophia’s hand, to warn her to make no objection, he said :

“ I think, dearest, we will not trouble your guardian any more to-day; he is evidently resolved not to give us that which we came to him for—his consent; and with regard to seeing the will, we must, I suppose, wait till he can receive it back from London.” And then addressing Mr. Howell, he continued : “ You will, perhaps, do us the favour of writing to Mr. Armstrong for the copy of the will; this is Saturday, I suppose by this day week you will have received it, on which day we will again pay you a visit.”

Mr. Howell deigned no reply; he had thrown himself back in his chair, and looked as obstinate and wilful as an old mule ready to fling out his heels at every passer by. Taking his silence for consent, Wildner and Sophia took their leave.

"Do you remain long in town, miss?" demanded Owen, as he opened the door for their egress.

Her woman's wit led Sophia to suspect that the inquiry meant more than met the ear, for many reasons she deemed it advisable to lead him to suppose that they should remain some hours in Llanmichael; she, therefore, replied—

"Yes we shall remain till the evening; it is too hot to ride in the middle of the day."

CHAPTER II.

OWEN watched them at the door for a few minutes, and then returned to his father, unsummoned by the tinkling of the silver bell.

“How could you be such a fool, Owen,” exclaimed the old man as he entered, “as to mention Mr. Armstrong’s name? didn’t you see how Wildner caught at it? You may depend upon it he knows him, and will write to him, and so find out that I’ve no longer any power to keep that wilful girl from marrying him, especially as he has offered to settle all her fortune upon herself.”

“It was you were the fool, I think, father,” replied the young man; “what did you tell him Mr. Armstrong was Miss Sophy’s other guardian for; that chap, Wildner, is wide awake, and I shouldn’t wonder if they were to be off to London; and you know he could give his consent

and let them marry without asking you, just as easy as you could without him, and they'll snap their fingers at you, and make you give up all your accounts, and somehow I fancy, old boy, you wont find it quite as convenient as it might be to fork out Miss Harding's 20,000*l.*"

"I was taken unawares," replied the old man, in a subdued tone, for he felt that he had committed a blunder; and besides, in truth, he was more than half afraid of his son; "and I'm afraid, Owen my boy, you will not only lose the pretty little heiress and her twenty-thousand, but a few thousands also that I thought I should have made for you out of her money. I should have liked to have kept the use of it for a couple of years longer, and then we should be all right; but as it is, I fear, if I have to give it up before, it will injure considerably my own property."

"The deuce it will!" exclaimed the son; "that's anything but pleasant; I don't care a doit for Sophy Harding; I can get as pretty a girl as her, I'll be bound, any day of the week, but a fortune like hers is not as easy to be got hold of; and if that is taken out of your hands, and you have, as you say, money to make up out of your own savings, that will be the devil and all. By Jove, father, we must be stirring

and look after them; we mustn't let them be off to London to Mr. Armstrong on any account whatever; if we can't do better, father, you must give your consent and tell them to get married, on condition they don't interfere with you and the money for the next two years."

"Ah! my boy," chuckled the old lawyer, "I see you are up to a thing or two; and the best thing you can do now is to go and see after them."

"Oh, we've plenty of time," replied Owen, "for I thought of that, and asked Sophy when they meant to go out of town, and she said not till the cool of the evening, and she's too simple a fool to take one in, and besides, you know she prides herself upon always telling the truth."

"I wouldn't have you depend much on her simplicity, Owen," replied his father, with a sententious shake of the head, "for she has grown monstrously cunning all of a sudden; she puzzled me more than once to-day, I can assure you, and answered me with a degree of spirit I did not think was in her. I suppose that Wildner, who seems to be a keen fellow, has been giving her some lessons, so I'd advise you to look after them at once, or else they'll slip through your fingers."

“Very well, father, I’ll go then,” said the son, as he left the room; and having put away his papers, and carefully locked his desk, in which there were letters and memoranda which he did not choose even his father to see, he proceeded to the Plough, where he was soon in amorous chat with Docia, the fat, fair, and buxom, but saucy and vulgar barmaid.”

“I say, Docy,” said young Howell, as he wound his arm round her neck, and gave her a very sonorous salute, “are that party that came from Llangwyn still here?”

“What party, Owen?” demanded Docia.

“Why Miss Sophy Harding, to be sure, who you know father wants me to marry,” replied Owen, “but you and I, Docy, know a trick worth two of that, don’t we?” and he gave her another hug.

“Don’t be after hugging and kissing me in that way, Owen,” exclaimed Docia, with pretended coyness.

“I’ll hug and kiss you to death,” replied her swain, preparing to suit the action to the word, “if you don’t tell me at once whether Miss Sophy and her lover, Mr. Wildner, with that pretty puritanical looking Miss Eugeny Saville, are gone or not. By-the-by, Docy, that Miss Eugeny looked very sweet upon me

to-day in father's office, so mayhap, if I can't get Miss Sophy and her 20,000*l.*, I may take up with Miss Eugeny and her 10,000*l.*, so look sharp, girl, and don't give us any of your nonsense."

Now, it so happened that Docia had her own thoughts regarding the party above-named: besides the office of barmaid, she occasionally performed the duties of waitress and chambermaid. She knew very well that old Howell designed his ward for her swain, Master Owen; she had, therefore, watched her and Wildner, while waiting at table, with the lynx-eyes of jealousy; but she had seen and heard enough to satisfy her that Sophia was not likely to become a very formidable rival.

Sophia was not ignorant of the gossip of Llan-michael, which gave Docia of the Plough young Howell as her sweetheart; she therefore resolved to make her an unconscious ally and abettor in their escape, for Wildner had informed her that the Mr. Armstrong spoken of by Mr. Howell was a most intimate friend of his—in fact, the very man who had accompanied him to America, and that their best plan would accordingly be to go immediately to him, as he was fully assured in his own mind that he possessed equal powers with Mr. Howell: and, in fact, on mentioning

the name to Mrs. Roberts, she immediately exclaimed—

“ How stupid of me not to remember before all about Mr. Armstrong; why, Miss Sophy, he’s a cousin of yours: that is, he was your mother’s first-cousin, and I think I’ve heard say he was very much in love with her, but she preferred your father, wounded and sickly as he was, and that caused a coolness between them; but she remembered him when she was on her deathbed, and sent her love to him; and asked her husband to see and be kind to him, for her sake; and if anything should happen to him, to make him the guardian of her little girl. Well, Miss, your poor papa fell into so bad a way that he never left his room after your mamma’s death, so that he never went to London, or had the courage to ask Mr. Armstrong to come down to see him; but when he made his will, he appointed him, as your poor mamma had wished, co guardian with Mr. Howell, who, having so long had the management of his affairs, he thought would be the most proper person to manage them still. There was some talk of your going to London to be brought up with Mr. Armstrong’s daughters, and I don’t know now why it was you didn’t go.”

In consequence of this communication, Wildner and Sophia felt fully confirmed in the belief that

their best plan was to start instantly for London, instead of, as they had proposed, to Gretna Green; but they also agreed that it would be as well to deceive Mr. Howell as to their intentions, and for that purpose, Sophia, under pretence of washing her hands, and arranging her hair, summoned Docia to attend her in her character of chambermaid, and then—as if in the innocence of her heart and the confidence of girlhood—told her that they were now going home, very much disappointed at the ill-success of their mission, and that they should come again to see Mr. Howell on the following Saturday, and if he did not give his consent, then they thought they should run away to Gretna Green; and begging her, if Owen should come to the Plough, to detain him till they had nearly got home: for that Mr. Wildner was so angry with him for his interference, to which he imputed old Howell's obstinacy, that if he dared to follow them she was sure Mr. Wildner would knock him down, and she did not know what might be the consequence."

Oh, Sophy, Sophy, how ill did you maintain your boast of undeviating truth! But even the lamb, reputed to be the most innocent creature in existence, can play off many little tricks to deceive her pursuers, and why should not, there-

fore, the guileless heart of an innocent girl point out to her the best method of eluding the vigilance of those who would destroy her hopes of happiness, and interpose a barrier between her and the man of her choice?

Docia, proud of the confidence, and, in truth, a kind-hearted girl, resolved to serve her in the way she had herself dictated, though she might, perhaps, have her own suspicions that the young people had no intention of waiting till the next week before they commenced their journey northward. It was in accordance with this resolve that she coquettred with Owen, refusing for a time to satisfy him whether the party had left the Plough or not, though, in consequence of her suggestion, they had quitted the inn very shortly after Owen entered it; and as the bar was so placed, that whoever entered or left by the front door could not fail to be seen, they had ordered the chaise and horses not to come round, but had gone themselves into the stable-yard, where Mrs. Roberts and Eugenia re-entered their vehicle, and Sophia and Wildner remounted their horses, and left the town of Llanmichael by the same road they had entered it, though, as we shall see, it was not their intention to return to Llangwyn. At length Owen became impatient—

"I say, Docy, my girl," said he seriously, "do tell me, there's a good un, if those folks have left yet: for I shall be sure to get into a scrape with dad if I don't soon go back and let him know what I've been doing."

"Well, then," said Docia, who judged from the time they had been gone, that they must be now far on their way, "they've been gone near upon an hour, so that they must be almost at home by this time: for I heard them say they were to dine at Mr. Saville's at five o'clock."

"Oh, then, they're all safe, I'll be bound," replied the young man, who felt no inclination to ride after the fugitives; but I must go and tell dad they're gone back to Llangwyn: for I know he's a notion they're off to London."

"Oh, no, that I'm sure they arn't," replied Docia—though, in truth, she had her own doubts on the subject—"for I know they went out of town by the Llangwyn road. Why, if you'd been listening, Owen, you might have heard young Dio Jones of Penowen, say here, not half-an-hour ago, that he met Mr. Wildner and Miss Harding riding, very lovingly, side by side; and you know Penowen, well enough, is on the Llangwyn road, so that he couldn't have met them if they'd gone any other."

Owen did not remember to have heard any such thing, but as he had no idea that Docia could have any motive for deceiving, he believed that it was as she had said. He, accordingly, went home to tell his father, promising Docia that he would soon be back and spend the evening with her.

When, however, he had informed the old lawyer, he found that his statement—straightforward and feasible as it appeared—made no impression upon him. The fact was, that, during his absence, Mr. Howell had been seriously reconsidering all the circumstances, and had come to the conclusion that the young couple would not wait for him to receive the will from London, but would immediately start off to inspect it there. Much, therefore, to Owen's annoyance, he insisted upon his instantly mounting his horse to ride over to Penmervyn, the first stage on the London road, through which, go whatever road they might, they must pass, and being armed with authority from him, he might oblige Sophia to return to Llanmichael with him. It was in vain that Owen contested the point, proving by every argument in his power the unlikeness of Wildner's giving up his prize, and the probability that he would, instead, knock his

brains out, or shoot him, if he chanced to be armed with a pistol; but the old man was obstinate, and the young one had nothing for it but to obey. With a very ill grace, therefore, he mounted his horse, resolving, however, if he did not find them at Penmervyn, or overtake them on the road, he would return immediately, and so be enabled to keep his engagement with Docia.

CHAPTER III.

DOCIA had almost unconsciously told the truth in saying that the party had quitted the town by the Llangwyn road: they had done so expressly for the purpose of eluding inquiry; but, after having ridden about two miles, they left the high road, and, at a farm house, whither Wildner had sent them, they found a second pair of horses, with a post-boy, accompanied by Wildner's groom, with a fresh horse for his master.

Sophia and Eugenia now exchanged places, and parted with much kindness and affection. Poor old Peter was very loth to allow his young lady to go without him; but she persuaded him that he could be of more service to her by returning to Llangwyn, and taking care of her horses, and whatever other property she had left there; besides, when she wanted her maid, he would be the most proper person to escort her to London,

where, she candidly told him, she was going to see her cousin, Mr. Armstrong. This name, which was quite familiar to the old man, had the effect of fully reassuring him, and he yielded a willing consent to return with Eugenia to Llangwyn.

As Sophia was giving Eugenia a last farewell embrace, she whispered—

“ Go back, dearest, by Aberdee, it will answer two purposes; if any one should be pursuing you, your change of road will perplex them; and, besides, though it is not much nearer, the crossing in the ferry-boat will rest both you and the horses.”

Sly Sophy—she had yet another reason, but that she did not choose to tell, though it might have proved quite as effectual in persuading Eugenia to follow her advice.

Wildner had arranged to assume the character of a servant for the first two or three stages, after which they proposed taking the mail coach, which was, as yet, the most expeditious mode of travelling—railways not having as yet penetrated into Wales—and for this purpose he took his servant’s livery great-coat as a disguise; and thus, Sophia and Mrs. Roberts in the chaise, and he riding as their escort, they started on their expedition, taking a cross-road,

which led to Penmervyn, and which, though a somewhat circuitous route, avoided the town of Llanmichael, through which the direct road to Penmervyn lay.

Eugenia watched the carriage till it was hid by a turn in the road from her sight, she then turned into another cross-road, which led to Aberdee.

At first she felt not the loneliness of her situation; her spirits were unusually elated, and though she would have infinitely preferred her own Beda, yet the horse she was on was both gentle by nature, and thoroughly well broke, so that she had not the slightest cause for timidity on that score. There are few feelings which tend more to exhilarate the spirits than the consciousness of having assisted, by any personal exertion, in promoting the happiness of others; and that she had done so this day, Eugenia felt convinced; and she was now going home to gratify her beloved father by proving to him how useful his little Eugy could make herself when called upon for exertion; besides which, the scheme of their going to London instead of to the north, gave her the most unmixed satisfaction, for, going as Sophia did, to her guardian and relative, hers could not in any way be called a runaway match, which Eugenia's modest nature had been very averse

to. Eugenia was not of a bold or determined character. She was too mild, too gentle, too timid, and too modest, of her own abilities; yet she wanted not for firmness, when she knew that she was pursuing the right path; but, unfortunately, it took some time to convince her of this fact. She had been hitherto accustomed to depend more upon others than herself. Her mother, though of a very mild and gentle character, was yet possessed of a strong mind, and acute and rapid perception: to decide, and that most properly was with her the work of a moment, and Mr. Saville, as well as Eugenia, was accustomed upon all occasions to yield implicitly to her better judgment. Since her death, Eugenia had referred always to her father — thus never exerting the powers of her mind, which, in consequence, ran considerable risk of becoming weakened by so seldom being called into action.

After a time, her spirits flagged, and she allowed her horse to reduce his pace from a canter to a walk. Her thoughts, too, became very busy with many far from pleasant anticipations for the future. The first disagreeable she should have to meet with would be the ill-humour of her cousin, who, she knew, would never forgive the slight of her having been selected to be

Sophia's confidant instead of herself; and she knew, by experience, what very bitter and sarcastic observations Camilla could make under an affectation of pleasantry, so that all the rest of the party might be very well amused, while she alone felt the full force of the sarcasm.

Eugenia's unfortunate want of confidence in herself, made her dread the ordeal of providing for her father's somewhat epicurean palate unassisted by Mrs. Roberts, who had been so long used to study his taste that she failed not to please by the variety and delicacy of the viands which she sent to his table; and she was, at the same time, so very economical, that poor Eugenia quite looked forward with dread to the next week's bills, lest they should so considerably exceed the usual allowance as to call forth an observation of displeasure from her father, to offend whom she felt would cause her the greatest possible misery. The third source of most painful meditation was the speedy departure of Eutace Somerville, who was to leave Llangwyn on the following Monday; and this involved another painful reminiscence, namely, his want of confidence in her—not that she for one moment doubted his honour or his constancy, but, without any explanation, how could she expect that her

father would place the same reliance on his word that she was disposed to do; besides which, should another ask her of her father, what could she say? how could she plead her love for Eustace, when her father had not even been asked to permit him to endeavour to win that love, and how could she dare to plead an engagement to which her father had not been asked to give his consent? A feeling of shame crept over her; she blushed deeply and hung her head, when she thought how unmaidenly had been her conduct in having engaged herself to Eustace Somerville without her father's consent and approbation; and yet, as we shall see, she was willing to ratify that engagement the very first opportunity.

While allowing these depressing thoughts to absorb her so completely as to be scarcely conscious where she was going, a hand was gently laid upon her bridle, and a voice, whose peculiar sweetness, while it awakened an echo in her own bosom, sounded to her conscious ear almost reproachfully as she remembered the subject which had so lately occupied her thoughts, said—

“ Eugenia, dearest love! why so sad? what has occurred to vex your kind heart? Has there been a failure in the plans and projects of the day? and yet, no; for if there had, I should not

see you here. Has Wildner not behaved as he ought, and do you therefore feel doubtful for the happiness of your friend?"

"Nothing of the sort, dear Eustace!" replied Eugenia, as she put her hand in his, and her deep blushes, and unfeigned look of surprise and pleasure, told him how unexpected, and yet how welcome his appearance was to her; "everything has succeeded far better than we had reason to expect. Sophia did not, as you know, at all calculate upon Mr. Howell's consent; and, indeed, spite of Wildner's behaving most nobly, in offering not only to settle all her own fortune on her, but to add another 10,000*l.* to it, the old gentleman would not be persuaded even to listen to him."

"So then they are off for Gretna Green," interposed Somerville.

"But they are no such thing," replied Eugenia, with a roguish smile. "In the course of conversation it came out, quite unintentionally I believe on the part of Mr. Howell, that a Mr. Armstrong, who it appears is a relation of Sophia's, is co-guardian with himself, and he also proves to be a very old friend of Wildner's, so to him in London instead of to Gretna Green they are gone. I am so pleased, dear Eustace, for you know I never liked the run-

away scheme, it is so bold, so indelicate, I think, for a girl to travel with a man all the way to Scotland to be married."

"And yet, dearest, I would give anything I am in possession of to induce you to do the same."

"Hush, hush! my dearest Eustace, you know you promised not to say a word more on this subject; I own I wish you could have spoken to my father, but I have too much confidence in your honour not to feel quite sure that if you could possibly have done so you would; but I am quite willing to renew my promise of remaining single and unengaged, whatever may be said or done to induce me to alter this determination, for the two years we agreed upon yesterday, nor will I then give my hand to another unless it can be proved beyond dispute that you are either married, or about to be married, to one I trust more worthy of you."

"That is quite impossible!" exclaimed Eustace, eagerly; "and here I swear——"

"Hush, hush! dearest Eustace, do not swear!" exclaimed Eugenia, hastily; "you know I do not like to hear oaths used upon any occasion, and especially on such as the present one, for you know not what may occur, or to what you may be tempted; you may meet with one so infinitely

my superior in every qualification, that you would deeply regret having bound yourself by so solemn a promise to me. No ! dearest Eustace, I cannot, I will not, permit you to bind yourself even by a promise; you shall remain free, and I will be only conditionally engaged. I have no wish, no object, in fact, to wish to be married, for have I not the kindest, the most indulgent of fathers, and a happy home in all but one thing, the domineering spirit of my cousin; but she will either marry or have a house of her own as soon as she is of age, of which you know she now wants only fifteen months, so that from that annoyance I shall be relieved, and then I shall be as happy as even your kindness, dear Eustace, can wish me. If, however, at the end of two years you come not to claim me, my engagement to you ceases, and should my father urge me to make another choice I may perchance do so. But let us talk of something else; I do not like to believe even the possibility of such a thing taking place. Tell me how I came to meet you here, so far from Llangwyn; surely you have not walked all this way, and intend to walk back? it is too far, Eustace; you should not take such very long walks;" and the young girl looked so fondly, so affectionately in his face, that, but for the pre-

sence of the servant, he would have caught her to his bosom.

“I came expressly to meet you, my own precious one!” replied Eustace, as he pressed his lips on the little hand which still rested in his own, “and to escort you home, for I thought it would be too late for my own darling to be riding alone, or, at least, with only old Peter to guard her; and I have not walked, my sweet pet, so do not look so anxious, I have left my horse at the ferry, for you know he is rather troublesome in a boat, not liking to cross the water.”

“But what kind little fairy whispered in your ear that I should come this road? for it was only just as we were taking leave of each other that Sophia suggested the idea to me.”

“And did not the dear kind little creature whisper also the possibility of your meeting me?” demanded Eustace.

“No, she did not,” replied Eugenia; “but she looked I thought somewhat roguish; and though I did not suspect her real motive, yet I felt convinced that she had some object for wishing me to do so, and therefore I complied.”

“Just like you, my own Eugenia, always ready to give up your own plans to the wishes of others; but dear little Sophy had a kind plot

in her head for my especial gratification. Last night, as I was walking home with her and Wildner, she proposed that I should give you the meeting on your return, and promised to persuade you to take this road in preference to the more public one through Llanclare, so here you see I am, having spent the greater part of the day at Aberdee and its neighbourhood: and now tell me, darling, all about Wildner and Sophia, for I long to know how they got on with Mr. Howell, who, I understand, is very far from an agreeable person when his temper is irritated."

"He was very rude to Mr. Wildner," replied Eugenia, "accusing him of all manner of crimes, and indeed, as it appeared, he had some foundation for what he said."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Eustace, in some surprise, "why what crimes did he accuse him of?"

"He said," replied Eugenia, "that Mr. Wildner's real name was Selby, that he was already married and his wife still living, that he was a bankrupt, and had committed murder."

"And what said Sophia to these grave accusations?" demanded Eustace.

"Oh, she seemed quite satisfied, for she said once or twice to me, while Mr. Howell was saying these horrid things of Mr. Wildner, 'Some

one has been telling Mr. Howell and making the worst of it, but Charles has told me all about it, and I am quite satisfied.' I could not help thinking how very lucky it was that Mr. Wildner had placed that confidence in Sophia, for though he made it appear quite plain that the accusation was in some measure false, yet there was, I think, enough of truth in it to have frightened any girl from having him if she had not previously heard the whole particulars, and was satisfied as to what to believe and what to reject."

It was in the utmost innocence of intention that Eugenia made this remark. She thought not at the moment of Eustace Somerville's want of confidence in her, but the young man's conscience smote him, and he replied with vehemence:

"It was indeed fortunate; and I would to God it were in my power to place the same unlimited confidence in you; but I am bound by an oath, pressed upon me under peculiar circumstances, and from that oath I shall not be absolved for two years, but then, I believe, I shall be free; but if I were to violate it now, setting aside the dishonour of breaking an oath, voluntarily, I must acknowledge, taken by myself, I know not what might be the disastrous

consequences—poverty and disgrace, such as would forbid my daring to aspire to your hand, dearest Eugenia," and his voice became thick with emotion.

Inexpressibly shocked at having inadvertently caused him so much pain, the tears sprang to Eugenia's eyes, as she said :

" Oh, Eustace, can you forgive me? I meant not to reproach you; I thought only of Sophia and Charles Wildner."

" I believe you, dearest," replied he, " for I know the kindness of your heart too well to imagine for a moment that you would cause the slightest pain to any one, and especially to your own Eustace, who you know loves you so dearly and entirely."

They now entered the village of Aberdee, where, however, they stopped not, but passed on to the landing-place, where lay the horseferry-boat. The beautiful bay was now full, and the water was smooth and glassy as a summer lake; the boatmen were soon found, and the horses, accustomed to crossing the ferry, entered the boat without the slightest hesitation.

As they were crossing, the boatmen mentioned what a tremendous bore there had been with the coming in of the tide, and the dangerous posi-

tion in which they had seen a lady and gentleman placed, riding at full gallop across the sands.

Eugenia knew that it was her cousin's intention to show Arlington the Castle of Aberdee, and being but too well acquainted with her daring and, indeed, far too adventurous character, her heart misgave her that it was very probably Camilla and Mr. Arlington whom the boatmen had seen. Somerville, not wishing that Eugenia should be made acquainted with the particulars,—not knowing that she had already reason to suspect that it was her cousin,—endeavoured to turn the conversation: for, though it would redound so much to his own credit, he felt that it would make her very anxious for the ultimate safety of her cousin, of whose identity the description of the horses would, no doubt, convince her; but Eugenia made so many inquiries that her suspicions were fully confirmed, and as the boatmen could not inform her whether the parties they had alluded to had escaped or not, Somerville was, at length, himself obliged to relate to her the whole particulars; and the sweet smile, and warm pressure of the hand with which she evinced her gratitude to him

for his interposition in her headstrong relative's behalf, more than repaid him for all his exertions in the morning.

It was nine o'clock ere they arrived at Mr. Saville's. A lovely moon which had risen in the east, ere the radiance of an unclouded sunset had faded in the west, had, perchance, tempted them to loiter on the road; knowing, as they did, that it was the last ride they should enjoy together for years, perhaps for ever, can we, then, wonder that they should endeavour to prolong those moments of sad but ineffable delight?

Camilla and Mr. Arlington had wandered into a more retired part of the grounds, away from Mr. Saville, who remained near the entrance, anxiously listening to every passing sound, and especially when the footsteps of a horse met his ear. He welcomed them with unfeigned pleasure, and thanked Somerville over and over again for his kindness and forethought in having, as he said, gone to meet his little girl, whose natural timidity would render so late a ride, attended only by a servant, far from agreeable to her.

Eugenia, who was, in truth, much fatigued, hastened away to change her dress. She did not venture to ask after her cousin, being fully

persuaded in her own mind that she had retired for the night, and that any inquiry from her would only awaken her father's fears for his ward.

As she proceeded towards her own room Harris met her, and civilly offered her services. She had watched Eugenia's arrival, and threw herself in her path, in the hope of extracting, for the gratification of her own and her mistress's curiosity, some elucidation of the mysteries of the day.

Eugenia was not sorry for the opportunity thus afforded her of making particular inquiries respecting Camilla, unheard by her father. She, therefore, readily accepted the somewhat unusual offer. While taking off her habit she asked very minutely respecting her cousin's health, and whether she had taken sufficient precautions to guard against taking a severe cold.

Harris pricked up her ears. "So, so," thought she, "Miss Eugeny has heard something about my mistress having got wet through: I will see if I can't find out how she became so."

"My missis seems to think herself quite well, Miss," replied she to Eugenia's inquiries; "but I am much afraid she will suffer for the

wetting she got this morning. She seemed very poorly, indeed, when she came in, but she would not let me persuade her to go to bed, as I am sure she ought to have done. Your papa, Miss, had asked Mr. Harlington to dinner, and I think Miss Saville did not like that the gentlemen should dine without her, lest her uncle might think she was worse than she wished it to be thought she was."

"She must have been very weary and very cold when she came in," observed Eugenia; "I hope you took care that she had a fire in her room, and something warm to take immediately."

"Oh, yes, Miss," replied Harris, "I took care of that; but she was wet through to the skin, and all the things she had on were so soaking wet, I could have wrung a pailful, and more, out of them, I am sure."

Eugenia, who never made a mystery of anything, and whose candour induced her to treat every one around her with perfect confidence, never for one moment doubted that Camilla had told her maid of her accident, therefore replied—

"I am not surprised that it was so; and very, very thankful we ought to be to the Allwise Disposer of Events, that her life was spared."

"Was she, then, in much danger, Miss?" demanded Harris, artfully. "She told me that she had been in the water, but she did not tell me she had been in any danger; but you know, Miss Saville, Miss, she always makes light of everything; and she seemed too heavy and wearied like to care to talk about anything."

"You must take care of her, Harris, and mind that she has a warm bed, and everything comfortable when she goes to bed," remarked Eugenia: "for she was very near being lost in crossing the sands from Aberdee, and, indeed, I think she would have been drowned if Mr. Somerville had not been on the scur, and got her and little Tomboy out of the water. Can you tell me," and Eugenia's thoughts reverted to her second cause of consideration,--namely, the providing for her Father's gastronomic enjoyment, "what has been ordered for supper?"

"I really do not know, Miss, but I will go and ask cook, if you please," answered Harris, civilly; "but I heard Williams say that his master was very well pleased with his dinner."

"I am very glad of that," exclaimed Eugenia; "I was afraid that Mrs. Roberts's absence might interfere with papa's comfort."

"Will Mrs. Roberts be long absent, Miss?" demanded Harris.

"I really do not know exactly; but I should think not more than a week or ten days," replied Eugenia.

"So," thought Harris, "Mrs. Roberts can't be gone to visit her friends, as it was given out in the morning, or else of course Miss Eugeny would know exactly how long she was to remain."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the party assembled to the summons of the supper bell, Camilla received her cousin much more amiably than Eugenia had dared to hope for. The fact was, she had been very successful in playing the agreeable to Mr. Arlington. She had, after trying many, at last hit upon the only subject in which Arlington really took a warm interest—business. Not the detail—for of that he would have considered it both impertinent and improper to speak to a lady—but business as exemplified in the characters, suddenly acquired fortunes, and exaltation in rank of certain individuals of that so highly, in his estimation, valued class—the merchants of London. To Camilla, this would have been a far from interesting subject, had she not so particularly wished to ingratiate herself with Arlington; but, after a time, the really romantic and amus-

ing anecdotes and incidents which he related, awakened her interest, and she listened with a degree of attention which gratified Arlington extremely, and induced him to entertain a better opinion of her than he had hitherto done. There was only one class of reading with which Arlington was in truth intimately acquainted—the biography of men who had rendered themselves famous for their talents or their wit; and his memory was stored with anecdotes related of or by them, in the recital of which he possessed a peculiar graphic quaintness, which failed not to set the table in a roar of laughter, while his own risibility remained unexcited, and he had a trick at such times of raising his eyebrows and looking around with an air of astonishment, as if he would have asked what they could possibly be all laughing at, which, of course, had the effect of increasing their amusement considerably.

It was with a feeling of relief that Eugenia that night sought her pillow. She had dreaded a scene of a far from agreeable character, but she saw with pleasure that her cousin was too fully occupied with her contemplated conquest of Arlington to pay much attention to her, or to take any very considerable interest in the events of the day. Perhaps she thought it wiser not to

be too inquisitive, lest her own adventure should also be too strictly inquired into; and much as Eugenia believed her father loved his heiress niece, she knew that he would be seriously displeased at the very dangerous position into which, by her own folly, she had been drawn. Was Arlington really struck? Oh, how earnestly did she wish that it might be so, and that his family and position might prove such as to raise no objection on the part of her father; and she hoped that this most singularly and hastily formed acquaintance might not only prove the means of insuring her cousin's happiness, but of relieving her from that which, she could not but acknowledge to herself, was a heavy infliction, namely, her cousin's presence. Eugenia had a warm heart and kindly nature; to a certain degree therefore she loved Camilla, and had Camilla treated her with kindness and forbearance, there was no sacrifice Eugenia would not have made to ensure her gratification, and she would have loved her very dearly; but Camilla checked every growing feeling of affection by her undeviating system of reprobation upon all occasions when she could do so unobserved or unheard by her uncle, who, it was her policy to endeavour to persuade, if possible, that the evident want of unanimity between herself and cousin arose en-

tirely on Eugenia's side, not on hers; and, to a certain degree, she succeeded, but not quite to the full extent that she wished.

Camilla retired to her chamber with far more gratified feelings than she had done for many months. She was one who could not live in the world without an object: if she played on the harp or piano, she soon became weary if there was no one to listen to her; even when she practised, it was in the contemplation of some future display. She cared not to acquire knowledge for the sake of the instruction she derived from it, but as a means of astonishing those with whom she conversed; and if there was no one she deemed worth the trouble of exerting herself to please, she would often sit the whole evening silent, moody, and evidently disgusted.

In Arlington, she had a new object on whom to exert all her love of display. She felt, without any acknowledgment having escaped him to that effect, that he had not been accustomed to the society of accomplished or well-read women; and she looked forward to a glorious triumph in proving to him how much better acquainted she was with ancient and modern literature than himself. She evinced but little knowledge of the male character, and of Arlington's in particular, if she flattered herself that this would please him. The

idea of any woman, but a wife in particular, having it in her power to convict him of ignorance, would have annoyed him to that degree, that he would soon have felt for her a decided aversion.

And Arlington—let us see what were his thoughts, as he walked leisurely in that soft but brilliant moonlight from the Tower to Wildner's lodgings. The distaste, amounting almost to disgust, which he had felt towards Camilla after the adventure of the morning, in which his life, as well as her own, had so nearly been sacrificed to her headstrong wilfulness, had somewhat given way to a more kindly feeling towards her. Every man, but especially those who believe that they possess the talent of anecdotal conversation, likes to be listened to with attention and apparent interest. Camilla had done so, and had accordingly raised herself very considerably in his estimation. The return of Somerville in company with Eugenia had neither surprised nor displeased him: it appeared so natural that if she was to return home alone, he should go to meet her, especially as he was going away so soon; and when he was gone, the field would be left open for him; and yet, just at that moment he felt as if he should not care to take advantage of the opportunity; something almost approaching to a

feeling of generosity had been awakened in his bosom towards Somerville, by his conduct in the morning, and Eugenia's evident fatigue, which rendered her extremely pale, silent, and *distraite*, was in his eyes far from interesting.

CHAPTER V.

THE road which the travellers pursued, after parting with Eugenia, was, like most of the cross-roads at a considerable distance from the metropolis, in an awful state of disrepair; and, spite of its being the middle of summer, when every other lane was comparatively tolerable, this, from being completely overshadowed by tall and widely-spreading trees, which excluded the sun's rays, even at midday, continued almost impassable. It was this very circumstance which had induced Wildner to select it, believing that no one would for a moment calculate on any one attempting it in a carriage; but even he had not reckoned upon its being so very bad as it proved. In many places the water, from the late rains, which had caused the freshes in the river, rendered the road more like a pond than anything else, and the ruts were so deep, that, concealed as they

were by the liquid mud, it was totally impossible for the post-boys to avoid getting the wheels of the carriage continually into them, to the great endangerment of the springs of the vehicle, and the bones of those within it.

The lamentations of good Mrs. Roberts were at times quite piteous; her aged frame could ill bear the rough usage it was receiving, in being jolted from one side to the other of the carriage at almost every step. The kindness of her affectionate heart, however, mingled with her complaints of her own sufferings continual exclamations of fear lest her young companion should receive any injury.

Sophia, too, thought much more of the poor old woman's sufferings than of her own, and tried all in her power to render her as comfortable as circumstances would permit, continually begging Wildner, who rode on horseback beside the chaise, to tell the post-boys to drive carefully, and avoid the deep ruts as much as possible.

Mrs. Roberts felt the kindness of the gentle girl, and endeavoured as much as she possibly could to bear her sufferings in silence, but at length even her patience gave way, and she exclaimed—

“As if gentlefolks couldn't get married without all this fuss and turmoil! Ah! this is the

plague of money—poor people could get married how and when they pleased, without anyone's troubling their heads about them; but rich people must have guardians and lawyers to be consulted. But it's all that obstinate old mule, lawyer Howell's fault—he knew very well that Miss Sophy could marry if she pleased—and she would have seen that she could, if he would but have produced the will. Oh, dear! oh, dear! there's another shake: I shall be bruised black and blue, and you, too, my dear Miss Sophy, I'm afraid. I wish I'd old lawyer Howell here, to have his old bones shaken in his skin like nine-pins in a parchment bag, as mine are."

Sophia could scarce refrain from smiling, but the consciousness that poor Mrs. Roberts was undergoing all this pain and annoyance for her sake, led her to endeavour to soothe and comfort her. It had also the good effect of diverting her thoughts from the apprehension, which she could not wholly banish from her mind, that her guardian, or some person armed with authority from him, might overtake them, and oblige her to return to Llangwyn.

"This is a terribly bad road, certainly," said she; "but it cannot be long before we get out of this lane, and the high road will be all smooth and comfortable; and I'm sure we shall never

forget the gratitude we owe you for having left your own nice warm chimney-corner to give me the comfort of your countenance and support in this journey."

This had the effect of turning the old house-keeper's thoughts into a different channel.

"Oh, talk not to me of gratitude, Miss Sophy," exclaimed she; "it was only my duty to obey my master, Mr. Saville, who is the best and kindest of masters; and, besides which, could I ever forget the kindness I had received from your good papa and mamma, even if it was not a pleasure to me to be of any use to you, who I have known ever since you were born, and who I have nursed and dandled in these old arms many and many's the time."

So slowly were they obliged to proceed, that the sun had sunk long before they reached the outlet of this apparently interminable lane; when, spite of the utmost care on the part of the postillions, and the constant watchfulness of Wildner, who rode sometimes beside the carriage, and sometimes in front to direct them, one of the wheels sunk into a hole so deep, that in a moment the vehicle was overturned with a tremendous crash. Fortunately, neither Sophia nor Mrs. Roberts were materially hurt; the latter, on whose side the carriage fell, was leaning, half-dozing,

against the side, and, with the non-resistance of age, fell with the vehicle without a struggle, and suffered little or no inconvenience by the light weight of Sophia falling upon her. Wildner was fortunately on Sophia's side of the chaise, and therefore escaped uninjured likewise; and the horses and postillions were equally fortunate, but the carriage was injured beyond repair.

Mrs. Roberts, who had already predicted that they should not reach Penmervyn without being upset, started from her slumber, exclaiming with something like an air of triumph at the fulfilment of her prophecy—

“I told you how it would be, Miss Sophy. I knew we should have an upset; but I hope to goodness, my dear child, you are not seriously hurt.”

“I ought to ask that question of you, my good Mrs. Roberts,” replied Sophia, “for I have fallen upon you.”

“Why, your weight would hardly crush a fly, my dear child,” replied the old woman, “and you couldn't therefore hurt me; but I hope this racketey old chaise hasn't broken or dislocated some of our bones. But it's all that nasty old lawyer Howell's fault, and so I'll take the liberty of telling him—the pig-headed old fool!—if I live ever to come across him again.”

When released from the carriage, after shaking herself, and discovering, infinitely to her own satisfaction, that neither Sophia nor herself had received any material injury, she coolly remarked—

“ Well, that’s over, and it’s satisfactory to know it’s no worse.”

Sophia and Wildner could not resist laughing at the quaintness with which their companion congratulated herself and them on their escape with unbroken bones.

“ There’s not much to laugh at, though,” exclaimed the old woman, drily, “ for it’s getting on for nightfall, and I doubt if the chaise is not too much injured to take us on to Penmervyn. Ah, well a day! that you should have brought such a useless old body with you; for here we are some five or six miles at least from Penmervyn, and how we are to get there is the puzzle to me; for I can’t drag my old rheumatic limbs a matter of half a mile, how then can I walk five or six? But what a mercy it was, my dear young lady, that the chaise didn’t go over on your side instead of mine, for then my weight would have crushed you to death, and the chaise would have caught Mr. Wildner and his horse, and crushed them against the bank.”

In a few minutes afterwards the active-minded

old housekeeper seemed to have forgotten her age and infirmities, and thought only how she could render herself useful. She knew that she could not be of much use in assisting to raise the fallen chaise, but she could hold the horses, and so leave the postillions at liberty to assist Wildner, whose horse Sophia held; but Mrs. Roberts could not rest contented with the task she had undertaken, she must come and add her puny strength to that of the others. Sophia remonstrated with her for so doing, fearing that she might strain or injure herself severely, but she replied:

“Oh, no, my dear Miss Sophy, I sha’n’t hurt myself, but I can’t stand by and not give a helping hand when I know of how much consequence it is that you should get on to Penmervyn as quickly as possible.”

It is certainly one of the peculiarities of the female character, that when they have but little to complain of, trifles assume the importance of real misfortunes, but when real troubles come, or their sympathy for another is called into action, all their imaginary grievances vanish, and they exert themselves cheerfully and readily to assist or to perform whatever task, however disagreeable, they consider to be their duty.

The carriage was raised, but, as Mrs. Roberts

had prophesied, proved to have sustained so much injury, that it was quite impossible that they could proceed on their journey in it.

What was to be done? A consultation was held; Wildner would have ridden on to Pennervyn, and brought back with him another chaise, but Sophia was timid, and could not bear the idea of being left in the dusk of the evening in so lonely a spot without his protecting presence:

Either of the postillions were willing to have performed the same office, but there were objections which induced them to cast about for some other plan, and at length it was arranged that Sophia and Mrs. Roberts should mount the postillion's horses, and proceed as best they could to the nearest inn or farm-house, where they might chance to be able to obtain some sort of vehicle, of however humble a description.

And now let my readers' imagination paint the ludicrous cavalcade which our discomfited travellers formed. Wildner would have put Sophia on his own horse, but it was a young and high-spirited animal, and he doubted if it would submit to the unaccustomed contact of the habit, he, therefore, walked by her side, leading his own horse and supporting her on the postillion's

saddle—a far from safe or comfortable seat for a lady.

One of the postillions performed the same kind office for Mrs. Roberts, while his comrade brought up the rear, leading the other two horses, on which their luggage, fortunately neither very weighty nor considerable, was strapped.

At any other time the gay light-hearted Sophia would have been highly amused at the grotesque appearance of their little party, and would have enjoyed extremely the very unusual position in which she found herself,—mounted on a poor worn out post-horse, which stumbled continually, and from whose back she must have slid had not Wildner's shoulder afforded her support, and enabled her to retain her seat,—but the events of the day had alike wearied her body and mind, and though in after years she often referred to, and gave a most graphic description of, what she termed their compulsory gipsying party, yet at the present moment she felt only its inconveniences. She was not naturally of a nervous temperament, or one to give way to imaginary terrors, but the elasticity of her mind had, by the various events of the day, become so enervated, that she could not help giving way to a presentiment that this journey was destined to terminate disastrously,

and a warning voice seemed to whisper that she was not following the right path in yielding to her own and Wildner's wishes instead of obeying the guardian appointed by her late father. She remembered all that had been alleged against Wildner, and for a moment she doubted whether he was in truth so blameless in the matter as he had made her believe; but one look at his handsome and open brow, where honest candour was too faithfully portrayed to leave her for one moment in doubt, changed her ideas, and she almost hated herself for the momentary suspicion, and the revulsion of feeling induced her to twine the arm which rested on his shoulder fondly around his neck, and Wildner, without guessing the cause of the movement, instantly seized the little hand and pressed it to his lips. This action roused her, and recalled her flagging spirits, and, in spite of her fears of pursuit and alarm lest some more serious accident should befall them, she broke out into a merry laugh, saying :

“ What a romantic group we are, dear Charles; I may be taken for some errant demoiselle thus mounted, with you for my cavalier; but, alas, this poor old stumbling post-horse is but a sorry substitute for the lady's palfrey.”

They had just emerged from the lane, when a

horseman from the town passed them at a rapid pace. The postillions, as is the custom of the country, gave him the evening benediction, which he briefly returned, without, however, for one moment checking the speed of his horse.

The sound of his voice, so peculiar in its harshness, and the momentary glance which she caught of his figure, convinced her that it was Owen Howell. She trembled, for she could not doubt what had been his errand to Penmervyn, and she feared that she should find some person there authorized by her guardian to detain her.

The postillion who was supporting Mrs. Roberts had likewise recognised the young man, and he said:

“That be young Price as was, Master Howell as he’s called now, Lawyer Howell’s son; I wonder what have brought he to Penmervyn? no good, I’ll be bound. Can he be after Miss Harding?” for the man knew Sophia well, and the reports of the neighbourhood had enabled him to form a tolerably shrewd guess as to the sort of expedition they were engaged in. “If I thought so, I think I could put she and Mr. Wildner up to a trick that would give him the go-by, if he or any one else should be thinking of nabbing them in Penmervyn.”

“Why, what would you advise them to do?”

demanded Mrs. Roberts, who was quite conscious that Sophia ran some risk of being detained if any person in Penmervyn should have been authorized by her guardian to do so.

"Why, you see," replied the postillion, "I know of a bit of a wayside public, where they've got an old post-shay, and plenty of good strong horses; it be kept by an uncle of mine, and as the public be but little frequented because it be so out of the way like, he keeps a farm as well. It's just out of the road here, about a matter of a hundred yards forrad; and if so be as Master Price should take a fancy into his head that it be she he's just passed, and come back again, why he'll be sure to miss us, for I don't think he knows anything about my uncle's public; and if Miss and Mr. Wildner would go there, why we could soon get out the old post-shay, and four fresh horses, and Shon and I could whisk them through Penmervyn without stopping."

This plan seemed so excellent, that Mrs. Roberts instantly communicated it to Sophia and Wildner, who eagerly caught at it: for Sophia had informed Wildner of the discovery she had made, and both agreed that there was considerable risk in going into Penmervyn; they soon arrived at a green-lane, quite overgrown with a soft mossy herbage, proving how

little it was used: down this they turned, and most fortunate it was for them that the turf did not return the sound of their horses' feet.

Young Howell had not in the moment of passing recognised them. He took them to be a gypsying party returning from a pic-nic in the woods; but, after a few minutes, he thought within himself, "what a queer lot;" but his shrewdness did not allow the question to end there. The second postillion, with the luggage on his horses' backs, awakened a suspicion, and after some minutes cogitation, he resolved to return and follow them into Penmervyn. Those few minutes, however, lost him all trace of the party: for, in the increasing gloom of the twilight, he remarked not the road which led to the farm public-house, and the turfey nature of the lane deadened the sound of their horses' footsteps so completely, that he never suspected that they had turned out of the road. As he did not care to overtake them till they were just entering Penmervyn,—for he was at heart a coward, and, single-handed, he cared not to come in contact with Wildner,—he, therefore, rode slowly, and when he arrived at the town, without seeing anything of them, he made up his mind that his first impression was the correct one, and that they had gone to their own

home without entering Penmervyn. He, however, knew that he dared not return to his father without being quite certain; he therefore inquired at all the inns in Penmervyn, at which they were at all likely to have stopped, and waited about for more than an hour.

Little did he dream that the postchaise-and-four which passed him almost at a gallop as he was leaving Penmervyn to return home, contained the very party of whom he was in search. Wildner had now changed his mode of travelling; he had left his horse with the wearied post-horses, in the farmer innkeeper's care, to be taken home by the postboy whom they had brought with them from Llangwyn: and wrapping himself in his servant's livery great coat, which he brought with him for the purpose, he assumed for the present the character of Sophia's servant, and Mrs. Roberts that of her nurse, conducting their young lady to London to see her father, who lay dangerously ill; this little tale would, they thought, fully account for the speed at which they deemed it expedient to travel.

No further delay occurred to them, and accordingly they arrived in London on the evening of the second day.

Travelling was not quite so rapid as it has since become; a journey of nearly two hundred and fifty miles was not, therefore, to be accomplished as it now is, in six or seven hours.

Having comfortably established Sophia and her aged attendant at a highly respectable family hotel, Wildner hastened to Mr. Armstrong's private residence, in Brunswick-square, for he was perfectly aware that it was too late to expect to find him at his offices in Stone's-buildings.

Mr. Armstrong, though he now held rather a high position in his profession, had toiled through all its grades. He had been a clerk in the office of the private solicitors of the firm of Selby and Etheridge, and Wildner having, on more occasions than one, consulted him in his legal capacity, had reason to consider his judgment so excellent, that he had consulted him regarding the forgery and his wife's elopement; and it was in accordance with his advice that he pursued the fugitives to America. On their return to England, by Wildner's advice, and with his assistance, he entered into business for himself, and conducted all Wildner's affairs—at that time of rather a varied character—in so satisfactory a manner, that he had no difficulty

in obtaining for him the patronage of a great number of his friends, so that he very soon got into excellent practice.

The first step on the ladder of fortune is the most difficult to achieve; all is comparatively easy afterwards, and of this axiom Mr. Armstrong proved the correctness; for a very few years found him risen from the subordinate situation of a clerk to be the head of a highly respectable and lucrative business, and from living in a very retired situation to being the master of a handsome establishment, and one of the best houses, in Brunswick-square.

He had a family of three daughters, handsome, elegant, and well-educated girls; for, even while only a clerk, he and his excellent wife would rather deny themselves necessary comforts than deprive their daughters of the advantages of a good education—the one was only a sacrifice on their own parts, the other would have involved the sacrifice of their daughters' after-position in life.

But Mr. Armstrong felt that Wildner's had been the hand which had raised him from a clerkship to the very comfortable position which he now occupied, and his gratitude was unbounded.

Well knowing in what high estimation he was

held by Mr. Armstrong, it is easy to imagine with what pleasure he discovered that he was the guardian and a relative of his Sophia—for even if the clause which Mrs. Roberts had mentioned was not found in the will, he was quite sure that he would smooth every difficulty which might interfere with his attainment of the hand of his beloved Sophia.

Wildner found Mr. Armstrong in the midst of his family circle, in a handsome and well-furnished drawing-room. He was conversing confidentially with his wife—a woman whom you had only to look at to feel assured of her many good and amiable qualities; somewhat *embon-point*, and with a complexion still unimpaired, she looked more like the elder sister than the mother of her three tall, handsome girls, who in figure resembled their father more than herself. Hers was one of those faces which win the heart through the eyes; the more you looked at it, the more the sweet benevolence of its expression impressed upon the mind of the beholder the assurance of her being all that her first appearance had promised as good, kind, and worthy to be loved.

Their daughters, with a tall, handsome, and very gentlemanly young man, the affianced husband of the eldest, were grouped around

the piano, playing, singing, and conversing by turns.

When Wildner's name was announced, Mr. Armstrong sprang from the sofa on which he was seated, exclaiming—

“The very man we were talking of! By what lucky chance do we see you in London at this critical juncture?—it is not possible that you could have received any notice of the event which has taken place, for the poor old gentleman only expired this afternoon; and he never, as far as I know, expressed any wish that you should be sent for. I only received the intelligence just before I left the office. I should have written to you, but I had forgotten the name of your Welsh retreat, for you do not often favour me with a letter. I was obliged to delay till the morning, and was just asking my Mary here, whose memory is so much better than mine, especially for the names of persons and places; but you don't ask me, Wildner, what I was going to write to you about?”

Wildner smiled.

“Why, the fact is, George, you have not yet allowed me to open my lips, even to pay my respects to your good lady, and besides I know you so well, that I felt convinced I had only to wait a little; and if you have, as I suspect from

your countenance, some agreeable intelligence to communicate, you would be sure to give me the full benefit of your knowledge before many minutes had expired, so that I should only have to exert a little patience."

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong laughed—it was a genuine, merry, kind-hearted laugh, which it did one good to hear. The daughters advanced to welcome the so highly valued friend of their father, and their companion was introduced, not without some blushes on the part of the young lady, and a little awkwardness on his own. Still the gentleman was too apparent in his demeanour not to please and interest Wildner, who rejoiced in the happy prospects of the daughter of his friend.

"Well, then," said Mr. Armstrong, when the girls and their companion had again retired to the piano; "I will open my budget. Your late partner, Mr. Etheridge, is dead; and, having at last become convinced that he had treated you both unkindly and unjustly, has left you his heir, or rather, his residuary legatee, with a request that you will resume your place in the mercantile world, and carry on the business, which was originally your father's, and from which he ought never to have driven you."

"Never," replied Wildner, emphatically; "I

have tasted the sweets of a quiet country life, and I do not think that any advantages that could be offered me would induce me to return to the turmoil, anxiety, and hurry of a mercantile existence; if, therefore, his bequest is clogged with such a proviso, I shall beg to decline it altogether. I have amply sufficient for every comfort I require; besides which, the business on which I have come to consult you would of itself be a barrier to my acceptance of such an offer."

" You did not always so despise the power which fortune, with a high mercantile position, would give you, my friend," observed Mr. Armstrong, significantly; " but I am happy to say there are no such conditions. He has only expressed his wishes on the subject, and it will be necessary that some one should take to the business, if only to wind up the affairs. But you have not asked me what it was that at length so completely convinced him of the error he had so long been in regarding you."

" To tell the truth, George, at this moment I care very little about it," replied Wildner; " at some future time I shall be glad to hear all the particulars; but just now my heart and thoughts are very full of a much more interesting subject."

“ Hey day ! *heart and thoughts*, Wildner ? that sounds very suspicious. Come, let us know all about it.”

“ You are co-guardian with a Welsh lawyer, of the name of Howell, to a young lady of the name of Harding, are you not ?”

“ I am,” replied Mr. Armstrong, “ not only her guardian, but, I believe, her nearest, if not her only relative on her mother’s side. She was my first cousin—circumstances separated us, and caused a coolness, so that for some years I lost sight of her altogether; but she did not forget me, and on her death-bed expressed a wish that I should be the guardian of her little girl, and that, should she lose her father while yet a child, she should be brought up with my children. Colonel Harding wrote to me, telling me the last wishes of his wife, but I fancied the letter cold and constrained, as if written only in fulfilment of his promise to her; I therefore did not reply to it. I made no allowance for his feelings, or the very delicate state of health in which he was. When he died, I received the intelligence that, by her father’s will, I had been appointed co-guardian with Mr. Howell, to the little orphan. I then remembered the letter I had received on my cousin’s death—I had preserved it. With what very different feelings did I now read it; for,

having been informed of the invalided state of the colonel, and his sufferings both of mind and body, after the death of his wife, I blamed myself severely for not having replied to it. I was poor, very poor, at that time, and the personal guardianship of the rich heiress, for whose maintenance I should have received a handsome allowance, would have been of infinite service to me. Still I hesitated to demand it, lest my motives should be misunderstood. My dear Mary, too, was very ill at the time, so that I could not receive the benefit of her judgment on the subject. I waited, therefore, till her recovery enabled me to consult with her. She was very favourable to the plan of receiving her into our family, not so much for the sake of the emolument, as that it would be in compliance with my late cousin's wishes. I accordingly wrote to Mr. Howell to that effect; in answer to which letter, I received one totally unfit to have been penned by any person calling himself a gentleman. He denied that it was ever the wish of either Colonel or Mrs. Harding that I should have the care of their daughter, accusing me, in terms too plain to be misunderstood, of having invented this claim to gain possession of my young cousin, of whom I was the most improper person to have the care, as, in case of her death, I should be a

benefited party, her mother's property coming to me as her nearest relative. I own I was so hurt and indignant at the bare idea that I could be influenced by such feelings, that, from that moment, I never made a single inquiry respecting my young cousin, and have very rarely had any communication with Mr. Howell. But how does all this affect you, my good friend, for I perceive that you have listened not only with attention, but with interest, to my narrative?"

Wildner immediately related to Mr. Armstrong the particulars of his acquaintance and attachment to Sophia Harding, with Mr. Howell's refusal to sanction their marriage; and their accidental discovery that *he* was co-guardian with Mr. Howell, and, from a hint which they had received, possessed equal power over their ward; and could, consequently, permit the marriage to take place even though Mr. Howell refused.

"This," pursued Wildner, "determined us to visit London instead of Gretna Green, as we had originally intended."

"Us!" repeated Mr. Armstrong; "is, then, Miss Harding with you?"

"She is," replied Wildner; "I left her with her attendant at the —— Hotel, in —— Street."

"My good fellow," exclaimed Mr. Armstrong,

as he rose to ring the bell, "why did you not tell me this before? Do you suppose that either Mary or I would suffer my cousin's daughter to remain at an hotel when I have a home to offer her? you ought to have known me better than this, Wildner, and have brought her with you."

"You forget, my friend," replied Wildner, "that you are total strangers to each other—till it was mentioned in Mr. Howell's office I do not believe Sophia had ever heard your name, and I knew not how you might feel affected towards her."

"I should be a brute if I felt otherwise than most kindly towards her," replied Mr. Armstrong, warmly. "Mary, my dear, come here, we want your assistance," continued he, calling his wife from the group at the farther end of the room, to whom she had retired, leaving her husband and Wildner to converse freely. She immediately rejoined them, and at the same time the servant entered the room in obedience to the summons.

"The carriage instantly," said Mr. Armstrong; and then turning to his wife, he continued, gaily, "I do not know whether you will forgive him, Mary, but really I feel half inclined

to quarrel with him, for I think he has used us very ill in not bringing my young cousin here at once instead of leaving her at an hotel; but I know you will not permit her to remain there, so I have ordered the carriage, and if you will just put on your bonnet and shawl you can go with Wildner, and bring her here to be our guest, with our friend Wildner, as long as they please. I would go with you, but I think you women understand each other better without us men. She might think I came to command her obedience in my character of guardian, instead of inviting her to be our guest as a friend and relation."

Mrs. Armstrong, to whom any wish of her husband's was as a law, which it gave her the utmost pleasure to obey, replied in the same gay tone in which he had spoken: "I think we must forgive him, George, in consideration that as he had never been in this house before, he knew not how amply we can accommodate Miss Harding and him." So saying, she hastened away to make the necessary additions to her dress for her evening ride.

Wildner having relieved his mind on the subject of Sophia, and being particularly well pleased with the proposed arrangement, now

reverted to Mr. Armstrong's remark, that he had something to tell him relative to Mr. Etheridge's change of opinion concerning him.

"I know," said Mr. Armstrong, in reply to his inquiry, "that it is painful to you to be reminded of the existence of the unfortunate Charlotte Arlington, or, as it seems she still chooses to call herself, Mrs. Selby. Yet it is to her you are indebted for having opened Mr. Etheridge's eyes. Johnson died in America, but not of the wound he received from you; from that he perfectly recovered, and might have done very well, for he had friends who interested themselves in his behalf, and procured for him the offer of an excellent situation, but his companion proved a bar; the Americans pretend to be a very moral people, and will not patronise any who live in sin; it was, therefore, intimated to him that unless he married Mrs. Selby they could do nothing for him, as no one would receive him into their counting-house. This he was very willing to do, for I believe, poor fellow, that he really loved her, and was more the seduced than the seducer, but she refused. She had heard, I suppose, of the large fortune left you by your uncle; she, therefore, declared that she was not legally divorced, because no one had sworn to having witnessed any

specific act which could enable you to obtain it, and that she would accordingly force you to take her back, or make her a very ample allowance. This refusal on her part preyed, it seems, upon poor Johnson's mind, and, united with his inability in consequence to procure any employment, reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness, and, as a very natural effect, induced him to take to drinking, which, on a constitution not originally very strong, and much injured by the severe wound he had received, soon terminated his career.

“ What became of his companion during the ensuing two years has never transpired, but I have reason to suspect that, spite of their pretended morality, she found during that period more than one American protector. She, however, about three or four months since, returned to England, evidently in very distressed circumstances. She had obtained a free passage as the attendant of an invalid lady; her conduct, however, during the voyage, had not been such as to make her friends, for the lady's family instantly on her arrival dismissed her without the slightest token of their approbation, nor would they allow her to refer to them for a character should she wish to obtain another situation.

“ Since then she has been going the rounds

of her former friends and acquaintances, representing herself as an innocent and ill-used woman. Had she contented herself with abusing you, whose absence left you in some measure at her mercy, she might to a certain degree have succeeded, but she did me the honour of abusing me also, as an aider and abettor in the whole affair, but especially in the death of Johnson. It was this which obliged me to inquire more particularly into the affair, and thus it was that I discovered that Johnson lived nearly twelve months after he received that wound.

“ Having somehow ascertained that Mr. Etheridge never could be convinced of your innocence, she called upon him, and told her tale with so much plausibility, that he not only gave her money himself, but promised to interest himself with other friends in her behalf. A second and a third interview, however, in which she ventured to improve upon her original tale, awakened his suspicions, and, as we lawyers should call it, he cross-examined her to such good purpose, that he made her contradict herself so completely, that he became convinced that the whole was a tissue of falsehood from beginning to end: the consequence was, that he dismissed her with a severe reprimand. His mind having once admitted a doubt of your

unworthiness, he resolved to pursue the investigation, and accordingly sent for me, to hear from my lips the true version of the affair. Hitherto he had always refused to listen to me, for though he never accused me of being an accomplice, yet he believed that, being under such considerable obligations to you, I had upon all occasions concealed the worst parts, and brought forward only those most in your favour. He now, however, listened patiently to the whole, asking me many questions, and ending by declaring himself fully satisfied that he had cruelly wronged you, and, as the only reparation, he resolved to make you his heir; giving me immediate instructions for the drawing up of his will, in which, after a few legacies to old friends and servants, for I believe he had not in the world a single relative, he settled an annuity of 200*l.* a year on Charlotte, to keep her, as he expressed it, from annoying you. She has, therefore, no excuse for leading a life of sin."

CHAPTER VI.

SOPHIA HARDING, to whom London was altogether a new world—one, indeed, which she had often heard spoken of and described by others, but which she had never expected, perhaps scarcely wished to see, and of which she had certainly formed neither a very just or correct idea—Llanmichael, Penmervyn, and some of the county towns of the Principality, were the most numerous collections of houses which she had ever seen before she commenced this so hastily-undertaken and rapidly-executed journey; the towns which she had passed through had appeared to her very large, but when she entered the metropolis, every street through which she was driven seemed to her so like the former ones that she could scarcely be persuaded that the postillions had not lost their way, and in their ignorance had driven them more than once through the same streets.

When, however, she had arrived, and partaken of a slight repast, she could scarcely persuade herself that she really was in London—that her journey was ended, and that her fate would now so shortly be decided; but she could not think—the various cries and incessant noises served to bewilder her; and, for the first hour after Wildner left her, she stood a little retired from the window, watching the—to her imagination—crowds of persons who were continually passing. She tried to amuse her mind by guessing at their various occupations, to fancy on what urgent business they could be thus rapidly hurrying along, little suspecting that Londoners rarely or ever loiter on their way, and that it is a criterion by which strangers can most easily be discovered—that of their walking slowly or stopping occasionally to gaze around them.

After a time she became wearied with this employment; her eyes ached as she watched the ever-changing scene, and her thoughts again reverted to her own somewhat embarrassing situation. Wildner had assured her that he should not be more than an hour absent, yet nearly two had elapsed, and he returned not. Could he have met with an accident? it seemed to her that in the crowds that were hurrying along some one must continually be thrown

down and trodden upon; and every shrill cry or whistle which she heard she believed to be the intimation of some such misfortune having taken place. Her thoughts then turned to Mr. Armstrong, whose name even she was not conscious of having heard, till it was mentioned by Owen Howell, and yet it would seem that he was, equally with Mr. Howell, her guardian, and the nearest living relative of her late mother. How was it that she had never heard of him before, and what were his feelings towards her? she feared far from friendly, or he would surely have sought her acquaintance long ere this. Wildner might in consequence have met with difficulties, or had to argue away objections with which he had not expected to have to contend.

Every five minutes now seemed to be at least twenty; frequently did she consult her watch, and often put it to her ear in the full persuasion that it must have stopped.

The waiters had offered more than once to bring in candles, but she had requested them not, because she felt that as long as there was no light in the room she might remain at the window to watch for the arrival of Wildner, who, however, she dreaded to see, so fully persuaded was she that some accident had happened to him; and she watched, therefore, with

anxious eagerness every carriage that entered the street, in expectation of seeing him brought home wounded or dead.

The streets had begun to thin, and she watched every tall and commanding figure, in hopes that it might prove to be Wildner. At length a handsome carriage entered the street, and drove up to the door of the hotel with that peculiar dashing abruptness and precision on which all London coachmen pride themselves. Sophia had not the slightest expectation that it would bring her him she so anxiously watched for; but still, unconsciously, she felt interested in observing it. In a moment the footman was off, the door was opened, the steps let down, and a gentleman sprang out, and instantly prepared to hand out a lady, to whom he gave his arm, and entered the hotel. Could it be,—was it indeed her own Charles?—but who was the lady? she had scarcely looked at her; she knew not, therefore, whether she was old or young. Ere she could at all satisfy her mind or check a few wild and bewildering thoughts, the room door was thrown open, and a waiter entered bearing two wax-lights, which he placed on the table, followed by Wildner and the lady. For a few minutes the dazzling lights so blinded her that she could not distinguish whether

Wildner's companion was one to dread or to welcome, and feel confidence in; she stood, therefore, bewildered and half stupified with contending emotions.

Mrs. Armstrong, divining the cause, advanced, and holding out her hand, said, in her own kind and peculiarly-harmonious voice,—

“ I need not wait for an introduction, for the likeness to a picture which my husband has of his cousin, assures me that I see before me Miss Harding; I am sent to carry you off a prisoner to Brunswick Square, where Mr. Armstrong—your cousin and guardian—waits anxiously to receive and to welcome you!”

The words were kind, but the tone and manner were kinder still; but poor Sophia, though she felt their power, looked from one to the other, as if to ask an explanation; at length, tears, which she had long repressed, filled her eyes, and trickled down her cheeks.

“ You are wearied with your long journey, and perplexed by the sights and sounds of London, to which you are unaccustomed,” pursued Mrs. Armstrong, kindly pressing Sophia's hand; “ where we live it is comparatively quiet, and I have three daughters, of nearly your own age, who will all be delighted to make your acquaintance, and will endeavour to render your

stay in London most happy and agreeable. Our kind friend, too," looking towards Wildner, "has promised to make our house his home."

Sophia looked up and smiled sweetly, for those last few kind words had completely reassured her—she felt that her guardian would not have invited Wildner also, had he disapproved of the marriage—the prospect, too, of female society of her own age, was to the modest and sensitive girl perfectly irresistible.

She had not before ventured to look in Mrs. Armstrong's face; she had felt that her voice, words, and manner, were kind and amiable, but still she had dreaded to encounter her eye, lest it should tell a very different tale. She now, however, felt certain that she should meet with no marks of disapprobation there, and she therefore looked up as confidently, as confidingly, as if she knew that kind face intimately; and, in fact, she almost felt as if she had known it the moment she gazed upon it, and she could scarcely resist the strong inclination she felt to throw herself into her arms.

Wildner had been a silent but gratified spectator of the little scene; he saw the mutual confidence and affection which, almost unknown to themselves, had sprung up in the bosoms of these two amiable women towards each other. Mrs.

Armstrong almost felt as if she had discovered another daughter; her likeness to her mother rendered the face so familiar to her, that she could not persuade herself that Sophia was a total stranger; and Sophia felt as if she had found a mother, one in whose bosom she might confide every care, every trouble of her life, with the most perfect assurance of meeting with the kindest sympathy, and the most sincere and disinterested advice.

Mrs. Roberts was summoned, and Wildner, having given her all the necessary directions for following them in a hackney coach with the luggage, and paid his bill, while Sophia was equipping herself for the short journey, handed the two ladies into the carriage, which quickly conveyed them to Brunswick Square.

Mr. Armstrong received them on their entrance, and imprinting a fatherly kiss on the forehead of Sophia, said,—

“ You are welcome to London, my fair cousin; I have long wished for the pleasure of making your acquaintance; but after the severe rebuff I met with from your Welch guardian, I gave up all hopes till you had attained your majority, when it was fully my intention to recall myself, by letter, to your recollection, never for one moment imagining that you had been kept, as my friend Wildner informs me, wholly ignorant

of my existence. My good friend Wildner, however, as if some beneficent fairy had informed him of my wishes, has kindly anticipated the time for me; and now that we have got you amongst us, we shall not be very willing, I can assure you, to part with you again."

Blushing and delighted at the very kind reception she had met with, from both husband and wife, Sophia replied, "I cannot imagine what could be Mr. Howell's motive for so carefully concealing from me the fact of my having in you not only a second guardian, but also a near relative."

"I think I can divine Mr. Howell's motive," interposed Wildner, laughing; "there was a certain red-haired ogre,—nay, blush not, my Sophia,—for whom he destined your fair cousin with her ample fortune."

"Ay, ay, was it so?" replied Mr. Armstrong, gaily; "and you, my fair cousin, as I may presume by your allowing my black-browed friend here to carry you off, affected not the fiery-headed gentleman; but come, let me introduce you to my daughters—Sophia, the eldest, named after your mother, to whom I was much attached, is within a few weeks the same age as yourself; Mary, the second, is nearly eighteen, and Georgiana, the youngest, has just passed her

sixteenth birth-day. Their characters you will find as varied as their complexions, so that you may take your choice of grave or gay, whichever suits you best, but I flatter myself you will find them all good amiable girls, both anxious and willing to render your visit to London as agreeable and satisfactory as you can wish."

There was in the tone of the voice, as much as in the kindly manner in which he spoke of Wildner, sufficient to assure Sophia that she had nothing to fear, and that even if the clause mentioned by Mrs. Roberts should not be in the will, Mr. Armstrong would smooth all difficulties in the way of her marriage with Wildner; her heart beat with a sensation of inexpressible happiness, and her soft blue eyes beamed with an expression truly seraphic.

"What an exceedingly lovely girl your cousin is," remarked the young lover to his betrothed.

"She is pretty, certainly," replied Sophia Armstrong; but there was a coldness in the tone which proved incontestibly that the remark had been far from agreeable to her.

"Pretty!" replied he; "oh, she is far more than pretty; her countenance is perfectly angelic. She must have dropped from the clouds; she can never be a creature of flesh and blood—pray introduce me."

Sophia Armstrong's lip curled for a moment in scorn, and mentally she exclaimed, "Oh, man, inconstant as the wind—for ever seeking some new point, some new attraction!" Perhaps a girl never more fully evinces her jealousy, than when she magnanimously introduces her lover to an imaginary rival. Sophia Armstrong instantly complied with Sidney Talbot's request, and having introduced him to Miss Harding, walked away to some distance, and busied herself apparently in selecting and dividing the music of herself and sisters.

Did her manner betray her pique to an indifferent observer? No: she certainly blushed very much, and perhaps looked a little graver than usual; but what so natural as that a girl should blush and feel somewhat confused at naming her lover to a comparative stranger. Sophia Harding, however, detected a deeper feeling lurking under the apparent indifference of her manner.

"A fellow-feeling makes one wondrous wise." She had not been informed that Sidney Talbot was Sophia Armstrong's accepted lover; but the action had shown her that on the young lady's side, at least, there was a deep feeling of interest. Sophia Harding was one who would have gone out of her path to avoid hurting a worm. She

received the compliments, therefore, of the young man with an air of coldness and distrust, and replied only by monosyllables.

Sophia Armstrong had watched the conference, and her heart warmed towards her newly-found relative, convinced that she was a true-hearted girl, when she saw how little she encouraged the attentions of young Talbot, who, somewhat annoyed at the coolness of his reception, soon turned away, and entered into conversation with one of his promised sisters-in-law. Sophia Armstrong now rejoined them, and an animated conversation filled up the time till the servant entered and announced supper.

It was a lively and sociable meal, and ere the evening was concluded, Sophia found herself as much at home in the Armstrong family as if she had been acquainted with them for years.

Sophia Armstrong, too, had discovered that she had not the slightest cause to dread any rivalry from her fair namesake, for that her heart was too wholly devoted to Wildner to have either eyes or ears for anyone else.

On a perusal of Colonel Harding's will, a copy of which Mr. Armstrong had likewise in his possession, Mrs. Roberts' statement proved to be perfectly correct, and Sophia, consequently, was at full liberty to marry whenever she pleased;

and, moreover, that the approval of either of her guardians was quite sufficient to rescue her property from the power of the other; not, however, that Wildner would listen to any other arrangement than the one which he had himself proposed to Mr. Howell.

“However much you may dislike business, Wildner,” said Mr. Armstrong the next morning at breakfast, “I am not sorry that the arrangement of Mr. Etheridge’s affairs will detain you in London some considerable time, during which I hope we shall enjoy the society of our fair cousin here; unless you prefer being first married, and taking a house in London for twelve months, for it will take all that time, I expect, to put Mr. Etheridge’s affairs in order.”

“You will not catch me remaining in London for twelve months, or even twelve weeks, my worthy friend,” replied Wildner, “unless my dear Sophia commands me; and I do not think this smoky Babel will prove more to her taste than my own—what say you, my love?”

“I have seen so little of it at present, Charles,” replied Sophia, “that I cannot form a fair judgment; but it appears to me that I shall soon sigh for the fresh air of the country, to which I have been always accustomed.”

“And to the country, dearest, we will return,”

replied Wildner, "as quickly as we possibly can. I will go with you, George, into the city, and see a little into Etheridge's business, and if I find it very complicated, and requiring much time to wind up, why should I not summon Arlington up from Wales, where I left him, and put it into his hands?"

"You cannot put it into the hands of a better person," replied Mr. Armstrong; "but what has taken him into Wales? I [thought his hands were too full with his own business just now for him to be spared."

"I will tell you what brought him to Wales as we walk towards the city," replied Wildner, who wished not to make Arlington's affairs a subject of conversation before so many.

In consequence of the discussion which took place on this subject between Wildner and Mr. Armstrong, Arlington was written to, urging him to return to London immediately, to take the management and wind up the affairs of the late Mr. Etheridge.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN taking his leave the preceding evening, it had been arranged that Arlington should take his breakfast at the Tower. When he entered the room, Eugenia only was present, employed in the duties of the breakfast-table. Politely, but coldly, she gave him the usual salutations of the morning—the simplicity of her dress, the pure character of her beauty, and withal, her reserve, were so many charms in the eyes of Arlington.

“He will be a lucky fellow who marries that girl,” thought he. “Her mind is evidently the seat of purity; she is gentle, unobtrusive, and modest; her beauty, of which she seems wholly unconscious, is sufficient to satisfy any man; and though her fortune is not large, it is far from despicable. Her cousin is a fine girl certainly, and her fortune is considerable; but I doubt if she has not some very extravagant

ideas; and then her manners, and her evident fondness of hearing her own voice, are qualities not at all to my taste."

Camilla entered the room; though dressed in far better taste than on the morning of his introduction, there still wanted a something, a neatness, a repose, a quiet appropriateness to the hour and the season, which her cousin's neat cambric muslin possessed. It was a morning dress, certainly, but it was more like the dress of a young lady prepared to receive company, than the unpretending costume of a young girl in her own quiet domestic circle.

Mr. Saville came in, evidently much annoyed. He shook hands with Arlington, and then turning, somewhat abruptly, to his niece, said—

"I fear you have ruined your horse, Camilla. Why did you not mention yesterday, when you came in, the length of time you had been with him in the water, that some more efficient precautions might have been taken? the animal is evidently very ill. I have sent for Jenkins; but I doubt if even he will be able to save him; and I shall certainly not buy you another, for I do not approve of the madcap way in which you ride about the country."

Arlington looked astonished, for he remembered how Camilla, to induce him to keep her

secret, had told him how nervous and anxious her uncle was concerning her. His speech did not betray the immeasurable importance which she had said he attached to her, as the heiress of the house of Saville ; he was, on the contrary, evidently more angry with her for having, in all probability, ruined her horse, than for the dangerous position she had herself got into.

“ Who told you that I had been in the tide ? ” demanded Camilla, haughtily ; “ this is some of that meddling fool, Eustace Somerville’s, doing.”

“ Why, what could he know about it ? ” asked Mr. Saville.

Camilla felt that she had made a blunder, which she knew not, at the moment, how to remedy ; she was, therefore, silent.

“ Come, Mr. Arlington, I must appeal to you,” said Mr. Saville ; “ as a gentleman and a man of honour, I expect you will tell me the whole truth.” So appealed to, what could Arlington do but tell the whole affair as it had occurred.

“ I thank you, sir,” said Mr. Saville, when he had finished. “ I suppose it was in compliance with that headstrong girl’s wishes that you withheld from me this information, which I ought to have known yesterday, that I might not only have taken proper precautions regarding the horses, but also have thanked Somerville, to

whose noble conduct it seems that my niece owes her life. And yet you had the ingratitude, Camilla, to call him a meddling fool. A day will come when you would be glad of such a meddling fool, and shall not find him. But as I do not choose that a member of my family should make herself the talk of the whole country, I insist, for the future, that you never go out without a groom, and that you learn to ride like a reasonable woman, not like a madcap."

Camilla was too much infuriated at this public reprimand even to reply; words of angry remonstrance rose to her lips, but her passion choked her, and she could not give them utterance; and leaving her breakfast almost untasted, she rose from the table, and retired to her own room.

Eugenia looked after her cousin; she was evidently very grieved, and in the tenderness of her heart she pitied, and would, if she had dared, have followed to soothe and sympathize with her; but, besides that she could not leave the breakfast-table, she knew, by experience, that her cousin would be far from receiving her condolences in anything like a conciliatory spirit; but that the passionate feelings which were choking her would burst forth on her head if the opportunity was given her. She, however,

turned appealingly towards her father, who perfectly understood the look, and thus replied to it—

“No, no, Eugenia, my love, I have not gone too far; your cousin, for her own sake, requires a check—her confidence will lead to her destruction. Had she listened to my advice in the morning, this would not have happened. Mr. Arlington knew not the danger into which she was leading him, or he would have refused to accompany her across the sands; and then she must perforce have returned with him.”

“I was warned, sir,” replied Arlington, “both by the old man at the castle and by the landlord and ostler at the inn; and I remonstrated with Miss Saville; but she told me, if I was afraid to accompany her I might return by myself, for that she was determined to cross the sands. Finding her so resolved, what could I do? you had entrusted her to my care; I dared not, therefore, leave her; and as she would not listen to me, I felt myself bound to accompany her, even though it led to my own destruction.”

“Nobly resolved,” replied Mr. Saville, gratified at the devotion evinced by Arlington for a member of his family, however unworthy, “and I thank God that you have escaped so well. Such a thing must not happen again. Thanks to the

sagacity of Beda, you were saved; and thanks to the noble interference of Eustace, that wilful girl was saved from paying the penalty of her foolhardiness."

Mr. Saville was now summoned to see the village horse doctor—a tolerably clever man in his way—for whom he had sent.

Eugenia immediately rose, and rang the bell twice. In answer to the summons Harris appeared. "Your mistress is not very well this morning, Harris," said she, "and has taken no breakfast; take her a nice hot cup of coffee and a round of toast; you may, perhaps, be able to persuade her to eat a little now. I am afraid she took cold yesterday, getting so wet as she did."

The girl smiled, and left the room. She well knew that, in bodily health, her mistress was quite well; but, as she somewhat pertinently expressed it, "she had got an awful pain in her temper."

Arlington felt and admired the extreme delicacy of Eugenia's conduct, in thus giving her cousin an excuse for her conduct in so abruptly leaving the breakfast table, and also in so thoughtfully providing for her comfort. "She will make a kind and considerate wife," thought

he; and again the idea crossed his mind, "Why should she not be mine?"

Mr. Saville returned to the room much relieved by his interview with the veterinary surgeon, who had assured him that there was no danger, the horse only requiring rest and a little warm comforting food to recover himself completely—the cause of the groom's and Mr. Saville's alarm consisting in the poor little fellow, from sheer weariness, having refused his food—but this soon returned when his strength was somewhat restored.

Mr. Saville invited Arlington to ride with him over his farm; for Beda, whose strength had not been so heavily taxed as Tomboy's, was quite well; and a little gentle exercise would be rather beneficial than otherwise to her. Arlington accepted the invitation, and thus Eugenia was left alone to pursue her morning avocations, which the absence of Mrs. Roberts would render somewhat more onerous.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMILLA, in the retirement of her own room, gave vent to a passionate burst of tears. Never had her uncle spoken so angrily, or in so determined a tone to her before; and now, too, when she really hoped that she had met with a man calculated to suit her ideas of mundane happiness. She preferred London to the country—he would live in London; her fortune would be of infinite service to him in his business; he would, therefore, be under considerable obligations to her. He was not too clever or too learned; for though Camilla professed to like clever and learned people, she infinitely preferred being herself the most clever and learned of the society in which she habitually mingled. Again, she felt that she was convicted of falsehood in the eyes of Arlington; for how different had been her uncle's conduct to that which, to Arlington, she had given him

credit for. She had led him to believe that her uncle prized her so highly that it was to spare his feelings that she wished the adventure to be kept from his knowledge; and what would Arlington think now? why, of course, that her uncle thought more of the horse, though not his own, than of her—how small it made her feel! Did the lesson prove of service to her? Alas! no; but I must not anticipate.

When Harris entered with the coffee and toast which Eugenia had so considerately ordered, she questioned in her own mind whether she should not be sulky and refuse to take it; but her appetite gained the mastery over her temper. She was really hungry, and she considered within herself that her refusal would injure only herself, and might not even come to her uncle or cousin's ears, to make them anxious on her account, so she eat the toast and drank the coffee. She could not, however, refrain from venting her angry feelings upon poor Harris. The girl, however, was too much accustomed to these bursts of ill humour to pay much attention, only taking advantage of the earliest opportunity to escape from the room. Camilla, from her window, saw the departure of Arlington and Mr. Saville, and she instantly resolved to go down to the morning room, to vent upon her cousin the anger which

she felt. Eugenia, however, was not there. She was still in consultation with her cook; and when she had concluded that, to her, most important business, she put on her bonnet to pay a few visits of charity, which she was accustomed to do every Saturday; so that Camilla missed her aim, which did not at all improve her temper, but she sat down to think seriously over her position. She remembered that on her attaining the age of eighteen, her uncle had told her that she was at liberty to choose for herself another guardian, if her residence in his family had become irksome to her; it was on some occasion when she had been complaining of the dulness of a country life, and had wished herself back in London. But though she had uttered the wish, she had no desire to act upon it, for she knew no family with whom she would like to reside, and she doubted whether anywhere she would be allowed as much liberty as in her uncle's family. She remembered that she had expressed a similar wish to Arlington; what had been her motive at the time, we have seen. Should she follow up that idea, and insist upon leaving her uncle's house for that of some one suggested by Arlington, for the remainder of her minority? It was worth a trial; for she felt fully assured that, away from her uncle and cousin, she could make herself

so agreeable to Arlington as to be quite sure of gaining his heart, or, if not his, that of some other equally eligible; for in London she doubted not that she should have a much more extensive acquaintance than the village of Llangwyn could afford her. Following out this train of ideas, she felt that it would be absolutely necessary that she should resume her good humour, and make herself as agreeable as possible to Arlington before she ventured to broach the subject. She caught sight of the two gentlemen returning from their ride; and instantly seating herself at her harp, she pretended, when they entered the room, to be too deeply absorbed in her practice to notice their presence.

“Where is Eugenia?” demanded Mr. Saville.

“I really do not know,” replied Camilla, in her sweetest possible tone of voice; “I have been in this room more than two hours, but she has not chosen to come in.”

She could not resist this sly hit at her cousin, by which she meant to intimate to Arlington that Eugenia had purposely kept out of the room, when she found that she was there, instead of generously coming in to let her see and feel that she, at least, had no angry feeling towards her, whatever her father might have.

Mr. Saville rang the bell.

"Where is your young mistress?" demanded he of the servant who answered the summons; "let her know that we are ready for luncheon."

"My young lady has not yet returned from the village," replied Williams, "but we expect her in every moment."

But a very few minutes elapsed before Eugenia, accompanied by Eustace Somerville, made her appearance, and the party immediately adjourned to the dining-room. During the meal Camilla laughed and talked as gaily as if nothing had occurred to put her out of temper; and her uncle, whose mind was at ease regarding the horse, and who never retained his anger long, was as kind as usual. Eustace and Eugenia were both silent; he had come to take leave, being about to start that afternoon to resume his regimental duties: and Arlington looked on, wondering at the versatility of Camilla, and questioning in his own mind whether her present apparent good spirits were real, or only assumed as a blind, or as a contrast to the evident depression of her cousin and the young Ensign; whatever was the cause, he felt that her gaiety was very ill-timed; in modesty, he thought, she ought to have waited till she was quite certain that her uncle had forgiven her; and, in kindness, she ought to have sympathised

with her cousin, the cause of whose depression was no secret—instead of which, she seemed to him rather to rejoice at the departure of Somerville, and so, in truth, she did: for she disliked him for the many honest truths he had told her; and she dreaded to hear her uncle publicly thank him for his assistance of the previous day, which she was quite conscious of having taken so ungraciously. As the afternoon was very fine, and not too warm, she proposed a walk immediately after luncheon, for she did not care to remain in the presence of her uncle longer than was absolutely necessary, lest any farther allusion should be made to the subject of the morning's lecture, for she knew not that the report of the veterinary surgeon had been so favourable. The proposal was acceded to; and while she was absent from the room to put on her walking dress, Eustace Somerville thanked Mr. Saville for all his kindness during the nearly two years he had spent at Llangwyn—kindness which, he truly said, would never be absent from his thoughts; and he hoped, when he returned from India, to be permitted to pay his respects to Mr. Saville and his family, as his first and most agreeable duty.

The old gentleman was much pleased with his evident gratitude, but his heart told him that

there was something wanting; that after the many months of strict intimacy, some explanation was due both to him and his daughter; that they loved each other he felt fully assured: was he, then, going without making his love known to her; and if known to her, why not to him also: what was he to understand by such conduct? He was positively bewildered, and though he took leave kindly, nay, most affectionately, of Somerville, he yet felt far from satisfied as to his conduct towards Eugenia.

The walk proved rather a sombre affair. Camilla vainly endeavoured to rouse her companions even into an attempt at cheerfulness: and Arlington, though he had no sorrowful parting to depress his spirits, yet felt too dissatisfied with Camilla, and indeed with himself, to aid her endeavours; he considered her conduct heartless in the extreme, and yet, though conscious that the kindest possible action on his part would be to draw her away, and leave the young lovers to themselves, he could not summon resolution to do so, but walked on moodily and discontented. At length the moment came when Somerville must take his leave; he had sent his luggage on, and they had now walked with him to within a short distance of Llanclare, where the mail-coach would take

him up: a warm pressure of the hand of Eugenia was all that he dared indulge in, in the presence of Arlington. After having taken leave of him, they waited yet a few minutes to see him mount the coach, and take his departure. When this was over, Eugenia turned away to conceal her tears; Camilla drew a long breath, as if she felt his departure a positive relief; while Arlington felt a degree of satisfaction for which he could scarcely account to himself.

He now, in some measure, recovered his spirits; the chief cause of his dissatisfaction had ceased, and he could now listen to Camilla's prattle, if not with interest, at least with civility, and she soon succeeded in drawing him into conversation. Eugenia said not a word during the whole of their walk home; she felt that it was quite as much as she could do to repress her tears, which were very ready to overflow on the slightest provocation. Fortunately for her, Camilla did not deem it worth while to tease or to ridicule her. She was, therefore, permitted to indulge her own sad thoughts uninterrupted. Camilla exerted herself to please, and cold, indeed, must that man's heart be who can resist when a pretty girl unaffectedly tries to make herself agreeable.

Immediately on her arrival at home Eugenia retired to her own room, where a flood of tears in some measure relieved her overcharged heart; and, having changed her dress, and subdued all traces of her emotion, she descended to the drawing-room, sad indeed, but calm and composed.

Mr. Saville watched her with evident anxiety for some moments after her entrance, but she bore the scrutiny unshrinking; and he, apparently well satisfied, turned away with a slight smile, and resumed his conversation with Arlington. He, too, had been occupied with the same object, but it was not with the same air of satisfaction that he concluded the examination; he would have been better pleased to have discovered more traces of violent emotion, for he knew the greater the agitation the more quickly is it succeeded by a calm, and the feelings which have been goaded almost to madness by the desertion of one, may after a short period of repose be awakened for another; but the calm gravity of this young girl evinced too perfect a reliance on the faith of her lover, to be very easily induced to change the object of her affection, and he felt that he must wait with patience if he ever hoped to gain her; perchance something might occur to turn the scale—a

rumour of her lover's marriage, or engagement to another, of which he would not fail to take instant advantage—time, too, might do much; in one so young, he would not believe that unswerving constancy under adverse circumstances could be found.

The evening passed off very agreeably. It was Camilla's policy, for many reasons, to endeavour to remove both from her uncle's and Arlington's mind whatever prejudices or angry feelings her conduct might have engendered.

Eugenia, too, felt it her duty to exert herself; and the very effort, much as it cost her, did her good, and rendered her more interesting in the eyes of Arlington.

The next four days passed over undisturbed by any event worth recording. Camilla felt that she was progressing in Arlington's esteem; she was, however, somewhat too obtrusive in her attentions. If he wanted his hat or gloves, she would not hesitate, proud as she was, to run and fetch them; if he required a button sewn on, instead of calling Harris to perform the slight service, she would instantly get a needle and thread and officiously insist upon doing it herself. This, instead of winning him, as she believed it would, annoyed and disgusted him with her, and induced him to become more

cold and distant in his manners—a line of conduct which she imputed to false delicacy, and a fear that, on account of her large fortune and position as the heiress of Saville Park, he would be rejected if he made her an offer; and by every means in her power, short of a positive offer on her part, she endeavoured to convince him of his error. Eugenia, in the meantime, kept aloof as much as her duties as hostess would permit; the unaccountable antipathy which she had felt on her first introduction to him had increased rather than diminished, yet his conduct towards her was everything the most fastidious delicacy could require; he was polite, attentive, and obliging, yet unobtrusive in his manners, never paying her any compliments, or evincing the slightest admiration. This admirable tact gained for him something nearly approaching to esteem, but it could not remove her antipathy towards him; for if his hand by accident touched hers, or he chanced to draw nearer to her than usual, an irrepressible shudder passed through her frame, and as soon as she could do so without evident rudeness she withdrew to a distance.

Her gentleness, the simplicity of her character, nay, even her evident avoidance of him,

contrasting so strongly with the conduct of her cousin, were charms to Arlington.

It is undoubtedly a characteristic of the male sex, that they seek most eagerly those who avoid them, and fly from those who pursue. The very difficulties cast in their path invests the object with a priceless value, their egotism never for a moment allows them to stop to consider whether in thus pursuing, and almost forcing a girl into the acceptance of their hand, they are acting either kindly or honourably towards her; and many a girl who feels a degree of repugnance towards a man on their first acquaintance ends by accepting him, arguing with herself that he must love her very much indeed to have thus, as it were, resolved upon making her his wife, in spite of her evident want of a reciprocal feeling, and that his love and indulgence of her after their marriage would be sure to win her affections—but, alas! she is but too often deceived, the Rubicon once passed, the man's love, instead of remaining unaltered, but too visibly decreases, and he now repays in kind her former coldness. There is no soil afforded in which her affections can take root, and with however good and right-minded a feeling she commences her married life, the

seed is starved, or, if even allowed to germinate, it is nipped in the bud; and if a feeling of religion or honour keeps her from leaving a husband so distasteful to her, she becomes a cold mannered, miserable, and heartless woman, unless it pleases the Almighty to give her children, on whom to bestow her wasted affections. A man should never forget that the husband ought only to be a more fond and affectionate lover, for that, in nine cases out of ten, a woman's affections, if not to be won, are to be rendered steady and firm after her marriage, and that any coldness and unkindness towards her may turn the sweet milk of human kindness in her bosom into gall and bitterness.

Camilla had not ventured seriously to consult Arlington regarding her choice of another guardian, and consequent removal to London. She had often attempted to approach the subject, but he, as if aware of her intention, had always changed the conversation as quickly as possible, and thus foiled her endeavours to gain his opinion, which she trusted would be favourable to her wishes.

On the morning of the fifth day after Wildner's departure, Arlington came to the "Tower" to take leave, having, as he said, received a letter from Wildner, requiring his immediate

presence in London. It also enabled him to inform the Savilles of the happy arrival of Sophia and her lover in London, and the kind reception they had received from her guardian, Mr. Armstrong, with a promise from the former that they should receive a letter from her in a few days, with full particulars.

This was a sad disappointment to Camilla, for she had hoped that Arlington would remain at Llangwyn till the Wildners' return, "instead of being thus," as she expressed it, "hurried off at a moment's notice, to gratify, she supposed, some stupid fancy of Wildner's."

CHAPTER IX.

As Wildner had resolved upon resigning the whole management of the business and property of the late Mr. Etheridge into Arlington's hands, there would be little after his arrival to detain them in London: it was, therefore, decided that the marriage should be celebrated ten days after the funeral of Mr. Etheridge, which was appointed to take place on the following Saturday. Arlington, they calculated, would arrive in time to attend it, for though Wildner had hardly given him credit for so much promptitude as he evinced in obeying his summons, still, as he knew that he would travel by the mail throughout, he thought he would arrive early on the Saturday morning, instead of which he made his appearance at a tolerably early hour on the Friday, which enabled Mr. Armstrong and Wildner to make their arrangements with him, infinitely more to their

own satisfaction, as there was much to be talked over and decided between them before Arlington could enter on the duties of the office they wished him to undertake. To Arlington this was a turn of fortune which he had never even dared to dream of, for while winding up the affairs of the late Mr. Etheridge he would not only have the opportunity of forming for himself a most excellent connexion, but also have the use of the large funds left by Mr. Etheridge, which Wildner would not withdraw till the accounts were all closed. Now, therefore, he need not think either of a partner or a wife—his every thought was concentrated on the business he had undertaken: he was quite in his glory, and for a time both Camilla and Eugenia were almost forgotten.

Sophia's time was very fully occupied in providing the bridal wardrobe. There was also a carriage to be selected, and many additional luxuries which Wildner's enlarged income would enable them to command.

Sophia Armstrong had soon forgiven her lover's momentary admiration of her fair namesake; and indeed, as well as every member of the family, became most fondly attached to her. Talbot so earnestly petitioned that his marriage with Sophia Armstrong might take place at the same time as Wildner's with Sophia Harding—

that the fathers, on both sides, were won over to give their consent, although it had been previously determined that they were not to be married till Sophia Armstrong was of age.

Sophia would gladly have kept Mrs. Roberts with her till after the celebration of the double marriage, but the good old housekeeper longed to be at home with her "own dear child," as she still fondly loved to call Eugenia; when therefore she saw that Sophia was so comfortably established in the family of her guardian, she begged to be permitted to return home, as she was sure that her services must be required by her young lady, not only in her capacity of housekeeper, but also of lady's maid, having been from the infancy of Eugenia her only personal attendant.

A few days before the double marriage was to take place, Sophia was sitting alone in the drawing-room, waiting for Wildner, who had promised to accompany her to the coachmaker's, for a final inspection of the carriage which had been selected for them, when the door was thrown open, and instead of Wildner, the servant announced, "A lady!" no name being mentioned. Sophia thought it might possibly be the dressmaker, a somewhat stylish personage, who was making the bridal dresses for Sophia Armstrong and herself,

but instantly perceiving it to be a total stranger, she desired the servant to inform his mistress.

He bowed in obedience to her commands, and was about to withdraw, but was checked by the stranger's turning abruptly towards him, exclaiming sharply,—

“ Do no such thing; I don’t know Mrs. Armstrong, and I don’t want to see her; if this is Miss Harding, it is she I’ve come to see, and I don’t want to see anyone else.”

There was an abruptness, a vulgarity, both in her words and manners, which shocked Sophia, and though she politely motioned her to take a seat, she could not at the moment summon courage to speak.

The man bowed and left the room; he was a London servant, who are no mean judges of character, and he muttered to himself, as he shut the door,—

“ I don’t like the looks of that lady; she’s either got a devil of a temper, or else she’s half drunk already. I’ll just take the liberty, ma’am, of staying outside the door, and if I hear you giving any of your sauce to that nice gentle young lady, I’ll just step in to see what you are up to.”

Sophia tried to appear perfectly calm, and

said, though with a somewhat faltering accent,—

“I have not the honour of your acquaintance, madam; will you favour me with your name and commands?”

Her visitor was tall, with a tolerably good figure and well-formed features, but whether from exposure to the sun, or from excess, her complexion had become coarse and somewhat rubicund; her eyes were dark and full, but bold, restless, and inflamed, and, united to her heightened colour, betrayed a degree of excitement of a very suspicious character.

“Perhaps, if you knew all, you would not consider my acquaintance much of an honour,” replied the stranger, sharply; “and as for my commands, if I might have my way, it would be to order you to pack yourself off back into Wales as fast as you could go, and leave Charles Selby to those he properly belongs to; not that I care much about the fellow, but now that he’s got so rich, it’s a shame that I should be turned adrift when he could give me a handsome carriage, and let me live like a lady. I’m his lawful wife; and, if you don’t wish, some of these days, to be had up to appear against him for bigamy, why, you’ll be wise enough to refuse to marry him now; for I suppose he’s taken precious

good care to keep from you that he's been married before."

Sophia, though trembling with nervous timidity, felt that she must not allow her fears to overcome her; summoning therefore to her aid all the spirit she possessed, she replied with tolerable firmness,—

"I am perfectly aware that Mr. Wildner has been already married; but, as that marriage has been dissolved by the laws of his country, it cannot at all interfere with my acceptance of him, as he is, of course, fully at liberty to make a second choice."

"It was not a legal divorce!" exclaimed Charlotte Arlington—or, as she still chose to call herself, Mrs. Selby—vehemently, and striking the table with her closed hand; "I never gave my consent to any such thing, and I'm not going to be thrown overboard in that cavalier style, I can promise you. I'm Charles Selby's wife—or Charles Wildner's, rather, for I hear that's the name he goes by now, and that he got lots of tin for changing it; and so I'm resolved to have my share of it; and, if he marries another, I'll sue him for bigamy as sure as I'm alive."

"I do not understand anything about such cases," replied Sophia, mildly, for she feared to

irritate her strange guest, with whose name and history she was perfectly acquainted, but who she believed in her heart to be deranged; "but I certainly never heard that mutual consent was considered absolutely necessary to the validity of a divorce, since it is pronounced in consequence of certain facts having been sworn to—"

"Well, mincing Miss," exclaimed Mrs. Selby, "and I tell you, those certain facts, as you choose delicately to call them, have never been proved, for I took precious good care that no one should ever see poor Harry Johnson and me in bed together!"

Sophia, blushing with disgust at her coarseness, replied—

"The law would not, I presume, have granted the divorce, if the judges or jury had not been quite convinced that Mr. Wildner was fully entitled to it."

"It was fraudulently obtained," exclaimed Mrs. Selby; "the witnesses swore to facts they could not prove. However, I don't care much about it now; and, as for Selby I don't care a button for him; so, if he'll settle a handsome annuity upon me, as I hear he can very well afford to do, or, what would be better still, give me a good round sum to make me hold my tongue, why, you may have the proud don with

all my heart, and I'll go back to America. I like the Americans; they're none of your fine gentlemen, but right go-ahead fellows, every inch of them. I hear Selby—I mean Wildner, has got lots of dingy—for, what with what his father left him, and then his uncle's—that he took the name of Wildner for—and now old Etheridge's, he must be positively rolling in riches; so you may tell him, if he'll just hand over a few thousands to me, well and good; but if he don't, I'll have the divorce set aside, and sue him for bigamy, and, if I can, get him hung; and then what good will all his money do him?"

Though really more than half frightened out of her wits, Sophia summoned courage to reply,

" You have already, I understand, 300*l.* a-year, which must, or, at least, ought to be amply sufficient to enable you to live respectably."

" How do you know this?" demanded Charlotte, rising, and stamping with rage, at finding that Sophia was acquainted with the ample means with which she was already provided. " Oh, I suppose the silly fellow tells you everything. He once did so with me, and nicely I paid him out for it. My brother Fred would not be such a fool, I know; he and I know a trick

worth two of that. Well, and now I suppose you'll tell him all about my coming here to-day? So as it would be a pity you should not be able to prove your words, I'll just leave the marks of my ten nails in that dollish face of yours."

She was advancing with a menacing aspect towards Sophia, when the servant, who had heard her loud and passionate tones, abruptly opened the door; and Sophia, taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded her, rushed past him, and flew up stairs to Mrs. Armstrong's dressing-room, and flinging herself into that good lady's arms, burst into a violent fit of hysterical tears.

Having at length succeeded in soothing her, and heard from the still trembling girl all that had occurred, Mrs. Armstrong reprimanded the servant for not having summoned her in the first instance — especially as he acknowledged that he felt very doubtful of the character or the sanity of the person he had admitted into the room with Miss Harding; at the same time, she could not but praise the promptitude of his interference when he considered her in danger, by which he had, no doubt, saved her from very unpleasant consequences.

Mrs. Armstrong assured Sophia that she had not the slightest reason to dread Charlotte's threats, for that the divorce was perfectly valid;

and legal proofs had been obtained that Charlotte had lived with, and passed during the voyage as Johnson's wife.

Wildner was much vexed that his dear Sophia - should have been subjected to so much annoyance; and he felt that he had good reason to congratulate himself on having already placed in her such full confidence. If every man would act in a similar manner, and confide in the girl he is about to marry, much of after unhappiness would be avoided, and many couples, who now live a life of wretchedness and disunion, or separate altogether, would either not marry at all, or would live together in happiness and comfort.

With Mr. Armstrong's assistance, Wildner took measures whereby the recurrence of Charlotte's visit was rendered impossible. Another 100*l.* a-year was added to her income, solely on condition of her immediately quitting England; and as she herself selected that country, a confidential clerk of Mr. Armstrong's saw her safely on board a vessel bound for America.

The double marriage took place. Brides are always pronounced "beautiful;" they are certainly always interesting, especially if, like the two Sophias, they are young.

The season was admirably adapted for their

bridal tour ; the country was in the very perfection of beauty. It was the middle of August, when autumn begins to mingle the depth and richness of her colouring with the still bright hues of summer. The corn-fields were just ripening their golden treasures ; and the variety of tints, in consequence, produced a pleasing diversity—every landscape was in itself a picture. The cattle, too, which sought, during the noontide heat, the shade of the large umbrageous trees, or stood picturesquely grouped together in the shallow water of some pond, or rivulet, added much to the beauty of the scene. Never before had Sophia so much wished that she possessed the talent of sketching from nature, that she might have taken home with her the remembrance of many a sweet spot. Their bridal tour was to the Lakes, intending to return home through North Wales. The Talbots, whose time was not so completely at their own disposal—young Talbot being in the same profession, and, indeed, in the office of Mr. Armstrong—were obliged to content themselves with a fortnight's sojourn at a retired village on the south coast, which being but little frequented, enabled them to enjoy the sea and their own society undisturbed ; and nothing could approach, in their estimation, nearer to the perfection of hap-

piness than this delightful fortnight, for the first time enjoying each other's society unrestrained by the presence of a third person.

Sophia's visit to the Lakes afforded her the greatest possible enjoyment; but it was not alone to these inland seas that they directed their course. York, with its splendid minster and fine old buildings, received the travellers within its ancient walls, and detained them some days ere their curiosity could be fully satisfied. Their next visit was to Greta Bridge and Rokeby—the scene chosen by Sir Walter Scott for his poem of that name, and in whose immediate neighbourhood it was written. With the poem in their hands, Wildner and his Sophia spent day after day in tracing, step by step, the scenes depicted by Sir Walter Scott. Though highly interesting in themselves, the very faithful description which the poet gives of every spot added considerably to their value in the eyes of the travellers. From habit, as well as from natural taste, Sophia loved the country: without the talent, she possessed the feeling that would have made her a painter. Wildner, too, had the same taste, though not to the same degree; but whatever pleased his Sophia, gave pleasure to him; he soon, therefore, learned to discover the beauty of a picturesque group of trees, or a pretty sequestered

cottage, which a few months before he would have passed as possessing nothing worthy of a second glance. But what afforded Sophia the most gratification, was a neat, clean-looking cottage, with its little flower-garden in front filled with common but sweetly-scented shrubs and flowers, and a happy group collected round the door, waiting the return of the husband and father from his daily toil—the cheerful and industrious wife preparing the evening meal, assisted by one or two of the elder children—the younger running hither and thither to catch the first glimpse of their father. Sometimes, when they passed such a cottage in the dusk of the evening, there stood at the door a young man and maiden in earnest but most interesting converse; the sparkling eye and eager looks of the youth, and the blushing cheek of the maiden, betrayed to Sophia the subject of their discourse—could she doubt that it was love? and she inwardly offered up a prayer that their love might terminate as happily as her own.

CHAPTER X.

THOUGH almost every mile of her journey had afforded to Sophia the utmost gratification, she was not sorry to see again "The Tower," which seemed to her like an old friend coming forth to meet her.

Whatever might have been its original use—whether, as was most generally believed, it was the sole remaining memorial of a stately mansion of the olden time, or whether it had been built in its present form as an observatory, lighthouse, or tower, from the summit of which to scan the country round—it was decidedly an attractive object for many miles on every side of it. From the sea it could be seen in a clear day nearly half-way across the channel, and it was said that the higher grounds in five different counties might be distinguished from its roof.

Both Wildner and his wife were pained to see

the alteration which had taken place in Eugenia during their absence. The brightness of girlhood seemed suddenly to have given place to the gravity of age; and Sophia longed for an opportunity to converse with, and if possible to gain her confidence and ascertain the cause of this change; but Eugenia most carefully avoided the subject, and any allusion to the alteration apparent in her only drew forth reiterated assurances that she was quite well, and had nothing particularly to vex her.

The few days that Arlington had remained after the Wildners' departure, Eugenia had kept in her own private apartment as much as politeness would permit. Still, however, she was obliged to be much more in the company of Arlington than was agreeable to her; and though his attentions were apparently divided with the strictest equality between her cousin and herself, she could not but feel conscious that his eyes were often fixed upon her with a most scrutinizing gaze; and it was to her like the eager look of some beast of prey preparing to make a spring. She reasoned with herself often on the injustice of her dislike, for she could not but acknowledge that his manners were most gentlemanly.

Arlington, in the meantime, had sought to ingratiate himself with Mr. Saville, and had

succeeded to the very utmost of his wishes. That gentleman had a peculiar respect and admiration for the character of a British merchant; and though he was but slightly acquainted with the details of business, yet he knew by name and reputation many of the leading houses, their after-dinner conversation was, therefore, most interesting to both, and Mr. Saville regretted his departure exceedingly, as he lost in him an agreeable and congenial companion; and, in consequence, he gave him a most kind and pressing invitation to pay him another visit, whenever his business would permit his absence.

Eugenia felt as if a very disagreeable incumbrance, a sort of incubus, had been removed from their circle by his departure, and her spirits would, doubtless, have in some measure recovered their tone, if her father and cousin would have permitted the remembrance of Arlington to have faded into the oblivion of the past; but both were incessantly making him the theme of their discourse, and thus continually recalling to her memory the antipathy she felt towards him.

Animals are endowed with strong instincts, by which they can discover those who like and are friendly to them, and are taught to avoid those who are inimical; why may not human beings, especially those of the weaker sex, possess feel-

ings somewhat analogous? Young people cannot be supposed to be enabled, on a first introduction, to form a very correct judgment of character, temper, and disposition; but introduce a child to a large party of strangers, and it will invariably select those who are naturally fond of children, and will avoid those who are not. Perhaps, if girls would oftener allow themselves to be in some measure influenced by this instinctive dislike instead of exerting their reason to overcome it, many uncongenial and unhappy marriages might be avoided.

Eugenia attempted to resume her usual habits and occupations, but with her the light heartedness of youth had for ever departed. She had changed, not as is usually the case, by imperceptible degrees, but had passed at once from the girl to the woman. Still kind, gentle, and thoughtful for the comforts of others more than for her own, yet there was in her manners a melancholy gravity which made you feel that some saddening remembrance hung heavy on her mind, or that she was sinking under some unknown but fatal disease. She still pursued her studies, devoting a portion of every day to her music, her drawing, and the reading of historical and other instructive works; but her moments of enjoyment were those in which she could

wander away by herself, and visit those spots which had become endeared to her by the presence of Eustace Somerville; and among these, the favourite was undoubtedly the Cwm-stone, where every word that he had uttered came back as fresh to her recollection as if it had been said but yesterday.

In addition to the hearing both her father and Camilla continually praising and recalling every word of Arlington's, she had the very unpleasant task imposed upon her of listening, without daring to reply, to their very unkind, and often very unjust, remarks concerning Eustace Somerville. This conduct was most injudicious on the part of both, yet each had their own particular motives for pursuing it. Camilla, seeing that it evidently distressed her cousin, did it simply to annoy her, without any ulterior object; not so Mr. Saville; he hoped, by pointing out what he considered Eustace Somerville's neglect and abandonment of them, to awaken Eugenia's pride and displeasure, which taking part against him, would serve to banish him from her remembrance; but Eustace had confided to her that his vow forbade him to correspond with either her or her father; she was, therefore, so far satisfied that his silence did not proceed from inclination, but necessity. Had he

felt himself at liberty to do so, the natural openness and candour of his character would have induced him to have confided all to her, and far better would it have been for them both had he done so: as it was, she dared not take his part openly against her father and cousin, and though in her own mind she was satisfied that he would not forget her, and that, when the two years had expired, all her anxieties would cease, still the constant annoyances to which she was subjected had the effect of materially injuring her health.

Twelve months glided away imperceptibly. Wildner heard frequently from Arlington, chiefly on matters of business; but he never failed to desire to be kindly remembered to the Saville family.

Wildner had taken a house two miles from Llangwyn, and nearer to the open sea.

It was a beautiful place, situated on the side of a steep hill, which was cut into terraces, supported by walls, planted with the choicest fruit trees. From these terraces open to the sea, which lay at about a quarter of a mile distance, and was arrived at through park-like fields belonging to the property, the view was extensive and beautiful, taking in the whole line of coast from the Worms-head to Tenby. The shore, which

bounded their own fields, consisted of a fine and hard sand; and a small village, called Pendio, from which also their house was named Pendio Place, lay on the sea-shore, snugly sheltered from the east and north by a half amphitheatre of limestone rock. During the summer this little village was much frequented for the purpose of bathing, by those who preferred a more quiet and retired place than Tenby.

Christmas was approaching, the Wildners had now been married somewhat more than fifteen months, and a beautiful boy was added to their family, at once the pride and plaything of both father and mother, and greatly admired and noticed by the kind-hearted Mr. Saville, from whom he received the name of Algernon, in addition to that of his father; when Wildner received a letter from Arlington, in which, after detailing his success in the business entrusted to his care, he expressed a wish to spend the festive season in Wales, where, besides enjoying the pleasure of Wildner's society, he could enter into a fuller and more minute relation of all that he had effected towards winding up Mr. Etheridge's affairs.

Wildner was pleased with the offer of a visit; he had been deterred from inviting him under the impression that his time was so fully occupied to

his own satisfaction that he would not care to accept it: now, however, that he had himself made the proposal, he immediately wrote to say that nothing would give him greater satisfaction; and, accordingly, a few days before Christmas, Arlington arrived.

He was much surprised and pained at the alteration which had taken place in Eugenia's manners and person. When first he was introduced to her, though only one year and a half had elapsed, he had considered her a mere child; there was now no longer anything childish in her appearance, but what she had gained in womanly contour, she had lost in gaiety of manner. The light musical laugh with which she had been accustomed to greet her beloved father's playful sallies, was now rarely, if ever, heard: a gentle melancholy smile alone repaid him for his attempts to cheer her spirits. He little thought, good man, how much his own remarks and animadversions on the conduct of Eustace Somerville had contributed to produce this air of melancholy, which, though extremely interesting, was very painful to behold in one so young.

Arlington felt that if he had already regarded her with some slight admiration she was become infinitely more dangerous now; for that it re-

quired a colder heart than even he possessed to resist loving her, there was something so fascinating in her gentle unobtrusive sorrow.

He doubted not that her still cherished love for Eustace Somerville was the cause; but having ascertained that not one word had been heard of or from him, he felt that the field was left open to him, and he resolved to turn it to his own advantage. The evident pre-engagement of her affections so far from wounding his delicacy, or for one moment inducing him to give up all thoughts of her, only rendered him more eager in the pursuit; the prize was more difficult of attainment, and consequently, infinitely more valuable in his estimation. Once his own, he doubted not that she would love him with equal devotion—it would become a religious duty; and he had seen that Eugenia's education and natural character led her to be a scrupulous observer of that as well as every other duty. But can duty produce love?

He had but little knowledge of female character, none of female hearts. Perhaps he considered them like banker's checks, very valuable to those who hold them, but easily transferable from one to another. It never, for one moment, entered his imagination, that a woman could remain constant to one object, or that it would require

more than ordinary tenderness and devotion to win a heart which had been truly and unreservedly given to another. He resolved to win her hand, her heart would then be his by right; and he believed her to be too upright and conscientious to withhold it from him. Oh, how little did he in reality know of the human heart when he believed that its affections could be thus subjected to the will and to the reason.

The calm coldness of manner with which he met Camilla convinced her that her cause was quite hopeless. She had looked forward with considerable anxiety to his arrival, hoping that his manner would have given her reason to hope that she had created for herself some interest in his bosom, even though his manner had been cold; had it been in the slightest degree confused, she would have been satisfied, but the calmness of his demeanour left her not the most remote chance of having succeeded in making the least possible impression on his heart. At first, indignant pride superseded every other thought; and she said to herself, "It is clear he cares not for me; why should I for one moment trouble myself further about him?" And perhaps, had Arlington's attention not been given to Eugenia, she would have been perfectly satisfied to consider him only as a friend; but when she

perceived that he was endeavouring to win her cousin's affections, she became perfectly outrageous; but the very excess of her passion induced her to keep it within her own bosom, and brood on it in secret. It became the subject of her nightly thoughts, till she had persuaded herself that she was the most ill-used girl in existence, and that she would be fully justified in taking the deepest revenge both on Arlington and Eugenia. For this purpose, she resolved to aid Arlington to obtain Eugenia's hand. Her heart, she was quite sure, never could be his, unless he won it after their marriage by a tenderness and devotion which, she rightly believed, was quite at variance with his character; and in her own mind she instantly formed a hasty, but deep-laid plan, for rendering them both miserable.

In furtherance of her schemes, she assumed an air of cheerful content, which completely deceived Arlington into the belief that she perfectly understood, and was quite satisfied with the line of conduct he had adopted. She also, by her manner, invited without demanding his confidence; and, in fact, played her cards so well, as to draw him into consulting her continually. The first instance was his asking her the cause of Eugenia's altered manners and appearance, to

which she replied, with pretended sorrow, at what she termed her cousin's weakness and folly—

“ Ah, poor child, she is much to be pitied; and yet it is very ridiculous, too, in one so young, to fancy herself so deeply in love with that Irish adventurer, Eustace Somerville. Of course, it is evident now that he never meant anything but just to amuse himself while he remained in Wales. Both my uncle and I have tried to convince her of her folly, in still clinging to the idea that he will ever return to Llangwyn; but she will not, I fear, believe that he did not care for her till she sees his marriage in the newspaper. I really think it would be an act of kindness to her to put it in; ten to one if anyone would see it who would think it worth while to contradict it; and even if it was contradicted, it would be very easy to keep her from seeing that newspaper.”

Arlington's sense of honour was wounded at the suggestion, which he instantly and decidedly rejected; still it did not prevent him from eagerly watching for every opportunity of lowering Eustace Somerville in Eugenia's esteem. Thus when Camilla, as much to distress her cousin as to play Arlington's game, spoke of him

as an Irish fortune-hunter, Arlington always made some remark tending to corroborate Camilla's opinion; at one time suggesting, that if he had really been the person he represented himself—that is, the nephew of Lord Stavordale, how easy it would have been for him to have obtained proof positive of such being the case; instead of which, it seemed to have rested solely on his own word without any confirmation whatever. At another time, he would ask if they were quite sure that his name was really Somerville; that was certainly the name of the Stavordale family, and it appeared by the peerage that the present Earl of Stavordale had a nephew, Eustace Grantley Somerville, the only son of his brother, the Honourable Colonel Somerville; but as he was his heir, it was very improbable that he would have allowed him to wander about the country unaccompanied even by a servant, as he had understood this young gentleman had done.

It was with considerable annoyance that Arlington perceived that all these insinuations of the unworthiness of her lover failed to shake Eugenia's faith. It is true, she said not a word in his favour; and the remarks evidently distressed her, for she always took the earliest

possible opportunity of quitting the room; and often when she returned, her eyes were red with weeping.

The term of his visit was drawing to a close; Wildner had no wish to press him to prolong it, for both he and his kind-hearted little wife pitied Eugenia for the persecution she was almost daily obliged to undergo; and they thought that, when Arlington was gone, the subject would be allowed to die a natural death, and be forgotten.

Camilla had now taken upon herself the character of Arlington's friend; and so completely did she succeed in deceiving him as to her real motives, that he firmly believed she was actuated as much by affection for her cousin as by her friendship for him.

"Do you think," said he one day to her, when they were talking about Eugenia, "that if she could be fully convinced of that fellow Somerville's utter unworthiness, she would be induced to give him up altogether?"

"Well," replied Camilla, in a somewhat doubtful tone, for it did not answer her purpose to appear too sure, lest Arlington should be led to suspect that she had some other motive for her conduct than what she chose should be apparent, "I think she might, but it would require very positive proof to make her believe it; and in that

case, I think, my uncle would most probably interpose his authority, for I am sure he has long since seen and regretted, as much as we do, his daughter's folly in still clinging to the idea that Somerville will ever return to make her his wife."

"Have you any idea where the young man now is?" demanded Arlington.

"I have not," replied Camilla, "unless he is with his regiment, the —— Light Dragoons; perhaps the agents of that regiment could furnish you with some particulars respecting him."

"Thank you," said Arlington, "that is a very good idea, and I will certainly act upon it as soon as I return to London."

"It is strange," thought Camilla, "that this man should so evidently resolve upon marrying Eugenia, who does not even attempt to conceal her dislike, nay almost abhorrence of his attentions, while towards me, who, in personal appearance, am certainly quite her equal, if not her superior, he should be so wholly indifferent—my fortune, too, I should have thought would have turned the scale in my favour, for he evidently loves money, and is eager to obtain wealth. However, I care not now; there was a time when a very few attentions would have made me love him, but that time is past,—nevertheless, I will

punish them both; I will teach them to slight Camilla Saville. Eugenia I have always hated, for there is no stain upon her birth, and if I did not guard my own secret with the most jealous care, my uncle would drive me from my position, and it would be she, not I, who would then be the heiress of Saville Park."

CHAPTER XI.

ARLINGTON returned to London, and a very few days after his arrival, he called on the agents for the —— Light Dragoons.

“ We never know much,” replied the cautious army agent, “ of the private affairs of the officers of the regiments for which we are concerned ; in this case, however, I happen to know that Lieutenant Somerville, for whom you inquire, is the nephew and heir of the Earl of Stavordale. He is at present with his regiment in India, but as its term of service has nearly expired, we expect every day to hear of its being ordered home, when, of course, he will accompany it.”

“ So,” thought Arlington, “ if that is the case I must lose no time, for if he should come home all may be satisfactorily explained, and I shall lose my chance.”

“ Can you inform me where the Earl of Stavordale usually resides?” demanded he.

“At Stavordale Castle, in Ireland,” replied the man of business; “it is there that we write or send to him, occasionally.”

“Thank you,” said Arlington, and he took his leave. He had correspondents in Dublin—near which city, on reference to the Peerage, he found that Stavordale Castle was situated; to them therefore he wrote, begging they would procure for him every particular regarding his lordship and family, but more especially as regarded his nephew, Lieutenant Somerville, of the — Light Dragoons; and if possible to ascertain whether he had passed some time in Wales previous to rejoining his regiment in India. To this letter he received the following most satisfactory answer:—

“The Earl of Stavordale, who resides chiefly at Stavordale Castle, has an only daughter, understood to have been betrothed in childhood to her cousin, Eustace Grantley Somerville, the only son of the Honourable Colonel Somerville—which contract, it is expected, will be ratified as soon as he returns from India, which it is understood will be in the present year. He was on half-pay for two years, in consequence of a reduction in the army, during which time he travelled, unaccompanied even by a servant, through England and Wales, and it is very pro-

bable, therefore, that he might have remained some time in Wales, as he did not return to Stavordale Castle till he was about to sail for India; and those who saw him and his cousin, the Lady Araminta Somerville together, say that they seemed to be on the most friendly terms. No doubt, therefore, if even the regiment should be detained in India, Lieutenant Somerville will return home, as the Lady Araminta is now of age, at which time it is understood that the marriage was to take place."

Here was a revival of Arlington's most sanguine hopes. The Somerville here mentioned was, no doubt, the identical individual he had seen in Wales; but if he was under an engagement to marry his cousin, it followed, as a matter of course, that he could not fulfil any engagement he might subsequently have entered into with Eugenia, unless his cousin should chance to have died in the interim; this, it seems, the lady had not done; as, therefore, he would, on his return to England, ratify his first contract, Eugenia would be left at liberty; he wished not, however to wait for that period. He longed to communicate the discovery he had made to Mr. Saville; but as he had never told that gentleman mentioned his hopes or wishes regarding Eugenia, he considered that it would

be most advisable to wait till he could venture to propose another visit into Wales. He had heard it said that "many a heart is caught in the rebound," and "that he must be a clumsy wooer indeed who does not win a girl whose engagement to another has just been broken off;" he therefore determined to go down himself, tell all he had heard, and immediately propose for Eugenia.

The summer slipped by, not idly with Arlington; he had worked most indefatigably to wind up the late Mr. Etheridge's affairs. Two years had elapsed since his death, and in a very few weeks he could promise that all should be in readiness to close his accounts with Wildner; but he discovered that he first wished to have a long conversation with that gentleman on the subject, and wrote to him begging to be permitted to pay him another visit in Wales. Wildner would most gladly have refused if he could have found a sufficient excuse for so doing, for he remembered the persecution to which poor Eugenia had been subjected during his previous visit, and he would not therefore have been instrumental, if it could possibly have been avoided, in subjecting her to a renewal of that most painful process; but it could not be helped.

Arlington was accordingly invited, and failed not to come immediately.

He found Eugenia looking decidedly ill, worse than when he left Llangwyn in the spring, and so thin and pale, that, being naturally of a delicate appearance, he could not help fearing that grim death would step in and snatch the prize from his grasp; he knew not that Camilla had seized every opportunity of taunting her with her folly in still clinging to the hope of Somerville's return, when it would have been her wisest course to have, to use her own words, "whistled him down the wind, and supplied his place with another." She dared not hint that there was another ready to accept her, because it was her policy to keep Eugenia in total ignorance of the part she was taking in trying to force or to persuade her into an acceptance of Arlington—that she left for her uncle to effect; she only did and said everything in her power to smooth the way for him.

To Mr. Saville, Arlington showed the letter he had received, after having, with apparent truth and candour, acknowledged that, from his first introduction to her, Eugenia had interested him extremely; he had, however, perceived the mutual attachment between her and the young

Ensign, and had therefore refrained from pressing his suit; but now that circumstances had awakened his suspicions and induced him to make inquiries, he thought he could prove beyond a doubt that Somerville had been amusing himself, considering her only a child. Not a word about the conversation he had overheard at the Cwm Wood; he, however, begged that Mr. Saville would keep the letter a secret till he had himself written to the Earl of Stavordale, and thus ascertained the truth of the statement it contained.

To the earl accordingly Mr. Saville wrote, without, however, mentioning the cause which induced him to do so. The earl's reply was as follows, and highly characteristic it was of the pride of the aristocrat.

“Stavordale Castle.

“SIR,

“The inquiry which you have thought proper to address to me concerning my nephew and heir, Lieutenant Eustace Grantley Somerville, has much surprised me. I was aware that while on half-pay he passed some months in Wales, but if he has left any debt unpaid, what can have induced you to remain so long silent on the subject? You might be perfectly

sure that I should not permit my heir to remain a debtor to any man, and least of all to some insignificant Welsh shopkeeper. But, perhaps your motive for making the inquiry may be on a much more tender subject, and I am led to believe such to be the case from your wishing to know if the report that he is about to be married to a member of my family is correct, and for the lady's sake I grieve that it is totally out of his power to heal the wound his soft tongue may have inflicted. From childhood he has been engaged to my only daughter, the Lady Araminta Somerville, and for family reasons, quite unnecessary to mention here, it is not likely that I should on any account permit that engagement to be broken off. Besides which, I have every reason to believe that a mutual attachment exists between my daughter and her cousin.

“ I remain, Sir,
“ Your obedient servant,
“ STAVORDALE.”

Written and signed by himself, and ostentatiously sealed with his coat of arms, no doubt could be entertained of the truth of the information which it contained, and that Eustace Somerville, spite of his very correct and gentle-

manly manners while at Llangwyn, could be looked on only in the light of a villain, who had gained the affections of one girl, when he knew that he was irrevocably engaged to another.

Camilla triumphantly exclaimed—

“ There, you see I was quite right; he was only amusing himself by making a fool of Eugenia, but she would not be warned, and no one, therefore, can pity her for her disappointment.”

Camilla forgot that she had always insisted that Eustace assumed a character to which he had no right in calling himself the nephew of the Earl of Stavordale; yet now the earl himself acknowledged him to be not only his nephew, but his heir—the heir to the earldom of Stavordale.

Kindly and delicately Mr. Saville communicated the contents of this letter to Eugenia; it was a death-blow to her hopes, but she uttered no word of reproach or complaint, but retired instantly to her room, and when she appeared at the dinner-table as usual, though her swollen eyelids betrayed the tears she had shed, her manner was unaltered, and she listened as usual in silence to the taunts of her cousin, now more publicly uttered, caring little for the presence of even her uncle himself, for she felt assured

that he too took part against Eustace Somerville, and wished Eugenia to be shamed out of her predilection for him. Arlington's attentions now became too marked to be misunderstood. Mr. Saville was delighted at the prospect of having him for his son-in-law; he had always liked him; his coldness appeared to him to be only his manner, not to come from the heart, and he doubted not that, once his wife, Eugenia would soon learn to love him quite as well as she had done Eustace Somerville; he never for one moment calculated upon the possibility of his treating her with coldness and neglect. After a few days Arlington deemed himself at liberty to request Mr. Saville's permission to pay his addresses to his daughter; it was most gladly accorded to him, but it was considered advisable by both gentlemen that Mr. Saville should first mention the subject to Eugenia, and he accordingly took an early opportunity of doing so—he drew her to his bosom, and kissing her fondly, said—

“Eugenia, my child, you are breaking my heart; I cannot endure to see you thus giving way to regret for one who has proved himself so utterly unworthy of your regard; banish every recollection of him, and, believe me, the surest way to succeed is to permit another to take his

place in your affections. Arlington loves you. He is a worthy young man, and his position in the mercantile world is such, that, on the score of worldly riches, you will have no wish left ungratified. The change of air, and the new duties your new station in life will impose upon you, will, I doubt not, prove beneficial to your health. You will quit the scene too of your disappointment, there will be nothing about you to remind of it, and the fond affection of your husband will soon wean your thoughts from every remembrance of the past. Be advised, my beloved child; if only to gratify me, try to love Arlington; he is, I am quite sure, worthy of your regard."

Eugenia dared not trust her voice to reply; she retired to her own apartment, where a gush of tears in some measure relieved her overcharged feelings. She prayed long and fervently to be directed aright, and rose from her knees fully persuaded that it was her duty to obey her father's wishes. Still she could not entirely overcome the repugnance she had always felt towards Arlington; and she remembered her promise to Eustace to remain disengaged the full two years after his departure. She, therefore, though she promised to listen to his suit, refused to bind herself by any engagement to Arlington.

till the spring, with which promise, though sorely against his inclination, Arlington was obliged to be content, for well he guessed the reason. Mr. Saville could not comprehend the cause of her refusal to become Arlington's wife immediately, for within the secret recesses of her own heart she had kept the solemn promise she had made to Eustace, and though forced at last to believe him unworthy, a mingled feeling of pride and honour induced her to resolve to keep it to the letter.

Camilla was now of age, and it was consequently necessary that she should accompany her uncle to London, to transact the necessary business on the occasion of her attainment of her majority: they accordingly went to London with Arlington. Camilla had so often mentioned her wish to reside in London, that both Mr. Saville and Eugenia were fully persuaded that she would not return into Wales; and Eugenia flattered herself that if she had her dear father all to herself, she could soon persuade him to allow her to remain his companion instead of becoming Arlington's wife. But Camilla had her own plans and projects, in furtherance of which, she chose to return into Wales, giving as her reason—a very proper one in Arlington's opinion—that she considered herself too young yet to have a house of her own while unmarried.

CHAPTER XII.

THE quiet, which the absence of her cousin afforded her, added to the hope which she cherished of being able to induce her father to forego his wish of seeing her the wife of Arlington, materially improved Eugenia's health; so that, when he returned from London, Mr. Saville was perfectly satisfied that she had become not only reconciled to the idea, but willing to become Arlington's wife. In vain, therefore, did she assure him that her only wish was to remain at home with him; and had not Camilla been there to point out to him continually what she called the weakness and folly of his acceding to her wishes, he would no doubt have done so. Mr. Saville had long been weary of his niece's society —there was nothing in her character and manners congenial with his own quiet habits and feelings; he really wished to be rid of her, but

he could not venture to tell her so. The only plan which suggested itself to him was that of her accompanying Eugenia when she married Arlington. Eugenia, therefore, must marry Arlington to enable him to be freed at once from the encumbrance of Camilla's society. Oh, the selfishness of man!

Could he, however, have been really made to believe that this marriage would not conduce to Eugenia's happiness, he would, doubtless, have given up all thoughts of it. But he still clung to the idea that, once Arlington's wife, she would quickly recover her health and spirits, and Eustace Somerville would be entirely banished from her remembrance, or thought of only as a girlish fancy, of which she was now heartily ashamed.

Again, therefore, was Eugenia daily, almost hourly, tormented to give her consent. For it chanced that the very same plan, though from very different motives, had suggested itself to Camilla's mind as well as to Mr. Saville's; and it was for this purpose that she refused to remain in London.

The spring came, the time at which Eugenia had herself promised to give a definitive answer. Not a word had been heard of or from Eustace, though six months had now elapsed beyond the

period he had himself named. Again her father urged her, by every argument in his power, to accept the hand of Arlington, and again she addressed herself in earnest prayer to her Heavenly Father to be directed in this most trying moment. The calm serenity produced by earnest prayer deceived her into the conviction that her petition was heard, and that to obey her father was the duty enjoined; and she, in consequence, informed him that such was her final decision. The fond kiss which she received for thus complying with his wishes, instead of having the effect of confirming her impression that she was pursuing the right path, made her wish yet more vehemently that she might have been permitted to remain with that dear father, who, she felt at this moment, that she loved more fondly than ever.

The moment Arlington received Mr. Saville's letter, he hastened to make such arrangements as would enable him to bring his wife home immediately, as he was most anxious that the marriage should take place with as little delay as possible; for, spite of the earl's letter, his mind, whenever he thought on the subject, misgave him, that Somerville might be able to offer some satisfactory explanation. He remembered that, in the memorable conversation which he had

overheard, Somerville had himself suggested the possibility of her hearing that he was engaged to another; and, though acknowledging this, he still seemed confident that when the two years had expired, he would come and claim her hand. If the engagement to his cousin was so binding, as the earl had represented, how could this be possible? might he not have reason to believe that his cousin would refuse to ratify the engagement, which would at once set him at liberty to claim the hand of Eugenia. He felt that, to obtain Eugenia, he must not lose a moment. Oh, why was this haste permitted, when the happiness of two beings was at stake—when the delay of a few days might have prevented the sacrifice! The ways of the Almighty are inscrutable; let us not, therefore, dare to inquire why was it that this was permitted.

The letter which Arlington wrote to Eugenia, thanking her for having accepted him, was so calm, so carefully worded, in fact, so utterly passionless, that Eugenia regarded it with a degree of satisfaction she would have deemed it impossible that any letter from him could have afforded her. It was a relief to feel assured that his love for her was of too cold a character to demand a very warm return; if, therefore, she obeyed him, and, to the utmost performed

her duty towards him, she doubted not he would be perfectly satisfied. What woman, before marriage, ever rightly calculated the exact degree of attention and love which her husband would require. Eugenia, feeling that she never could love again as she had loved, was pleased to find that Arlington was so calm and reasonable. He could not, of course, either wish or expect any very strong demonstrations of affection from her; but she knew but little of the man to whom she was about to be united. Though so cold and passionless himself, that he had never in reality experienced the true feeling of love, he had a great idea of the unbounded affection a woman ought to feel towards her husband, he considered that if he brought his wife home to a well-furnished house, with servants to wait upon her, supplied her with money sufficient to keep an ample table, and, withal, gave her an allowance for her own private expenses sufficient to enable her to dress according to her station, he had done all that could possibly be required of him; and that her love and gratitude ought to be his in return, and that she ought to study his every wish, and never indulge a thought but what would tend to his own gratification. As for his studying her wishes, or trying to make her happy by any other means than those above detailed, he would

have laughed at the idea. It was his pleasure to live in London because it was most convenient to him to do so; and though he had often heard Eugenia say how much she loved the country, and how infinitely preferable it was in her estimation, he never for one moment entertained the idea of consulting her wishes on the subject. She was to become his wife, and, as such, she must not only bend her will, but even teach her constitution to agree with that which he preferred. But the functions of life are not to be so dictated to; they will not bear a sudden change from the pure air of the country to the close and unhealthy atmosphere of an ill-ventilated London house.

From some whim or idea, never explained, Arlington did not write either to Mr. Saville or Eugenia, to name the exact day on which he should arrive. The marriage was fixed to take place on the fourteenth of May, but whether he would arrive on the tenth, or only on the day before that fixed for the wedding, remained uncertain; but Arlington had written to Wildner, at whose house he was to take up his abode, to say, that on the twelfth, if he would have the kindness to send a servant with a led horse, to the point at which the London mail crossed the road to Llangwyn, he should be there to meet it.

Wildner, in consequence, sent a servant with a led horse as desired, but judging of others by his own warm and affectionate heart, he thought that he should afford Arlington a most agreeable surprise by arranging that Eugenia also should give him the meeting; suspecting that, though Eugenia had consented to become his wife, her feelings towards him were by no means of a very warm character; and he doubted, therefore, whether her reception of him, if it were allowed to come upon her in the usual calm routine, would be such as to afford any gratification to the lover, for though he well knew that Arlington's feelings on most subjects were widely different to his own, yet still he thought that on this particular point he must feel, as every man would do, under similar circumstances, disappointed if his lady-love did not at least appear pleased to see him. He knew, however, that if he hinted his intention to Eugenia, her fastidious delicacy and fear of giving offence would induce her to refuse to accompany him he therefore resolved to cheat her into the performance of what he firmly believed would ultimately prove for her good, by leading Arlington to imagine that her feelings towards him were much warmer than they were in reality. He therefore, after having sent off the servant, rode himself up to Mr. Saville's,

and remarking on the paleness of Eugenia's cheeks, invited her to accompany him in a ride.

Eugenia refused: Beda had met with a slight accident, and could not be ridden.

Wildner looked, as he really was, vexed at the circumstance; and at this instant Camilla entered the room. From her room in the Tower, she had seen Wildner's groom with a led horse go up the road; she had also seen Wildner himself ride up to the house, and she in part guessed his mission; and therefore came down to see if there was any mischief to be done, and whether, as she suspected, Wildner had heard from Arlington, and had sent a horse to meet him. She was particularly anxious for the arrival of Arlington, for she was eager to commence the cruel revenge she had resolved upon.

"What is the matter, Wildner?" said she, as she perceived the look of blank disappointment which his countenance portrayed.

"I have been trying to persuade Eugenia to ride with me," replied he; "she is looking dreadfully pale, and I think a canter would do her good."

"To be sure it would," replied she, promptly; for with the quick perception with which she was gifted, she instantly understood, not only the kind intention which actuated Wildner, but

also the disgust and anger which the fastidious Arlington would feel at what he would consider so very indelicate an action on the part of Eugenia; she was resolved to cause disunion between them from the very hour of their marriage, and why not begin a little beforehand? They had both gone too far to think of breaking off the match now, which would have sadly marred her plans, and in her softest and most persuasive tones, she continued, "You know, dear Eugy, a ride on horseback always cheers your spirits, and does you good, so do go, pray. It's a pity Beda is not fit to carry you, but there is Tomboy, quite at your service, and you know he always behaves well with you."

So pressed, poor Eugenia, who never for one moment suspected the trap that was being laid for her, unfortunately consented. She knew that what her cousin said was perfectly correct; Tomboy had never indulged in any of his tricks and vagaries with her upon his back. She was soon equipped, and mounting Tomboy, who never seemed in a more steady mood, accompanied Wildner towards Llanclare, never for one moment suspecting that they should be likely to meet Arlington, or even to see the coach, or she would have positively refused to ride that way, for she well knew that Tomboy had so in-

vincible a dislike to a carriage of any description, but especially to the mail-coach with its four horses and long whip,—which he had, perhaps, at some time felt,—that it was a chance, if they met it in a narrow part of the road, if he did not bound over the hedge with her: and though she had no fear of being thrown, she would not for the world have run the risk of making such a display before all the outside passengers, and Arlington in particular.

Camilla laughed as she saw them take the London road: it was a short, sharp, and most unpleasant laugh—in tone, somewhat resembling that of Arlington.

“Now,” muttered she to herself as she retired to her own room to change her dress, in order to be ready to receive Arlington, and have a little private conversation with him while Eugenia was taking off her habit, “if you do not get into a nice mess, my fair coz, I shall have woefully miscalculated: and if you do, my revenge is already beginning. This action which Wildner—the great goose!—has led you into, will for ever destroy Arlington’s confidence in your discretion, and I will take precious good care that he shall believe it was all your own doing, and I know that you have neither the wit nor the confidence to tell him the truth.”

Wildner and Eugenia pursued their ride, chatting happily if not gaily; for Wildner was very partial to Eugenia, and she had the fullest confidence in him; her spirits were always, therefore, cheered by his presence. Tomboy was as quiet as possible; not even a jump or a curvet betrayed the lurking spirit of mischief that was within him, when, just at a sharp turn of the road the mail coach came suddenly and unexpectedly upon them. The coachman chanced at that moment to flourish his long whip over the heads of his leaders, at which Tomboy took umbrage, and, before Eugenia was aware, he turned suddenly round, and bounding over a low hedge, galloped across the adjoining field ere she had sufficiently recovered her presence of mind to check him.

“Cleverly done, by G—!—and a capital show off!” exclaimed a man in a half-farmer, half-sportsman-like dress, seated just behind the coachman; “who is she, Bill?” addressing the coachman; “she’d do well, with that prime little horse of hers, to follow our fox-hounds.”

A countryman who was sitting beside the speaker, answered,—

“That be one of the Miss Savilles, and a capital rider she be. I’ve know’d her take a five-barred gate without flinching; and there’s

many an *unked* jump she'll take on that little thorough-bred nag of hers, that our hunting gents look askew at."

Arlington, indignant at hearing his affianced wife thus familiarly spoken of, forgot that, though he had instantly recognised Eugenia; others not so quick-sighted or so well acquainted with the cousins might, from their knowledge of the horse, have mistaken her for Camilla, whose character for the bold recklessness of her riding was well known; had he given himself a moment's reflection, he must have perceived that such was the case, and that the action itself was quite unintentional on the part of Eugenia, who, instead of attempting to return to the road, had, the moment she had got her horse under subjection, crossed a second field, well knowing that it would bring her out into a lane communicating with the Llangwyn road.

Arlington was savagely angry with Eugenia for having thus, as he considered, needlessly and indelicately exposed herself to the impertinent comments of his fellow-passengers; for, being unfortunately seated on the coach-box, he could not fail to overhear every word that had been said: had he listened to the suggestions of reason instead of the dictates of passion, he would have felt assured that so delicate-minded

a girl as Eugenia had always shown herself, would not on any account have laid herself open to the remarks and animadversions of such persons, and that consequently she must have been led unconsciously into the situation in which he saw her; he would have remembered, too, that he had not acted either honourably or kindly towards her in not informing her of his intention of coming on that day, which would have prepared her—as perhaps his sudden and unexpected appearance might, by taking her off her guard, have had almost as much to do with the accident as the restive character of the horse. Again, he blamed her severely for attempting to ride an animal which she could not control; and yet, had he looked on her with unprejudiced eyes at the moment her horse took the leap, he would have felt that, though evidently unexpected, no woman could have sat her horse with more grace; and instead of being angry with her, he ought to have felt proud of her beauty and elegance: but what man who listens to the dictates of his anger, was ever reasonable?

CHAPTER XIII.

EUGENIA was quite as much annoyed at the adventure; not that she would have cared for the leap and the gallop; she was in reality too fond of riding and too good a horsewoman not to enjoy it, and it was only her sense of delicacy that prevented her being as fearless a rider as her cousin—but she had always considered it unladylike for a girl to leap hedges and ditches, and tear across the country as Camilla was wont to do; but she was extremely annoyed at having, though so unintentionally, exposed herself to the remarks of the outside passengers of the mail, and more especially of Arlington himself, whose fastidious ideas she felt conscious would be considerably hurt at what had taken place; still, she never for one moment imagined that he could be so unjust or so ungenerous as to condemn her unheard; for a moment, how-

ever, her old feeling of repugnance and dread of him induced her to think whether she would not ride home without waiting for them to overtake her; she, however, reasoned with herself that such fear was unnecessary, and that it was wrong for her to continue to give way to the awe and terror which possessed her whenever Arlington addressed her. She could not believe that Arlington would be seriously angry with her for what he must have perceived was an untoward accident, which she had had no power to avoid or prevent. She schooled herself, therefore, to meet him kindly and cordially, as she believed their present position towards each other demanded from her; to blush and appear confused she considered would be affectation and false delicacy, there being no feeling at her heart to call forth either demonstration of excessive pleasure or shyness. She, therefore, having regained the Llangwyn road, rode on gently, that Arlington and Wildner might overtake her. This apparent self-possession was another offence in the eyes of Arlington; she ought, in his opinion, to have blushed and evinced great confusion at thus meeting him for the first time as her affianced husband; and her kindly greeting, therefore, was received with a degree of coldness at once painful and chilling.

Wildner saw that all was not right, but he never for one moment imagined that Arlington could be angry with Eugenia; he, therefore, thought that if relieved of his presence they would very soon come to a right understanding; if Arlington was displeased, as indeed his manner sufficiently evinced, he was the only one really deserving blame, for having over-persuaded Eugenia to accompany him on her cousin's uncertain, if not vicious, animal: and he felt very well inclined to leave his character in their hands, to pull to pieces as much as they pleased, provided they came, in consequence, to a good understanding with each other. He, therefore, under pretence of having to call on business at a farm in the neighbourhood, left them to themselves.

Finding him still silent and gloomy, Eugenia kindly asked if he were ill or fatigued with his journey, hoping that the observation would induce him at once to state the cause of his too evident displeasure. She had never had to deal with a sulky temper, or she would have known that till the fit has had its way it is quite useless to expect the person to listen to reason.

"I am neither, thank you," replied Arlington.

It was not the words, cold and curt as they

were, so much as the tone in which they were uttered, that sent a chill, as of a bolt of ice, to Eugenia's heart. Almost unconsciously to herself, the reflection passed through her mind—

“And this is the man with whom I am to pass the remainder of my life; who thus can condemn me unheard, for an accident not of my own provoking? But it will not, cannot, be for long—death will soon release me;” and the tears sprang into her eyes. Arlington either saw not, or chose not, to notice her emotion, and they rode on in silence.

Tomboy, whose blood had been warmed by the impromptu gallop he had indulged in, became fidgetty and fretful, and gave her full employment in keeping him in something like order. Arlington, still unjust, fancied that she was either exciting him, to display her own good horsemanship, or that he was beyond her management; yet, instead of taking any notice, or affording her the slightest assistance, he continued to ride on in gloomy silence, till, wearied and unhappy, Eugenia felt almost inclined to let the animal have his own way, and carry her home, as he was disposed to do, at a full gallop; but this she felt would appear like showing a degree of temper, which she would not for the world have been guilty of: she therefore con-

tinued to restrain and soothe him as much as lay in her power—and thankful, most thankful, did she feel when she arrived at home. She waited not to be assisted from her horse, but sprang to the ground the instant the animal stopped, and hastened away to her own apartment, to weep in solitude, and wonder at the sudden change from the most punctilious politeness to all but savage rudeness in the conduct and manners of her lover.

“Lover! oh, no!” her heart whispered. “Love would have made him more kind, more lenient towards her; he could not have treated her so harshly for no intentional fault. Perhaps, when absent from her,” and her heart almost bounded with renewed hope at the idea, “he had discovered that he did not love her, and he only waited for an excuse or an opportunity to break off the marriage. Perhaps,” as she had always believed to be the case, “when it came to the point he found that it was her cousin he preferred. Oh, how gladly, how very gladly, she would resign him to her! Surely it was not too late?” At any rate, she resolved to give him every opportunity of explaining himself to Camilla. She therefore did not leave her own apartment till the second dinner-bell announced that dinner was being put on the table.

Camilla was alone in the drawing-room when Arlington arrived. Not expecting him, Mr. Saville had not yet returned from his farm. As it was a part of Camilla's plan not to appear at all surprised at Arlington's unexpected appearance, she received him calmly, but still with so much evident pleasure, that Arlington felt gratified, and for a moment questioned himself whether she would not, after all, prove a more agreeable wife than Eugenia.

Camilla at once saw the heavy cloud which sat upon his brow, though to her he was all politeness and urbanity. She softly hinted that he did not look so well as when he left Llangwyn, had anything occurred to annoy or vex him?

This was a home question. Arlington had already learned to confide in Camilla more than he had ever done in any human being before; he immediately, therefore, related all that had occurred, with his own far from generous or just conclusions. "I had hoped," pursued he, "that your cousin, young and inexperienced as she is, would have evinced more discretion and delicacy than to have exposed herself thus unnecessarily to the animadversions of such people as are usually the outside passengers of a mail coach. I had purposely avoided informing either her or your good uncle of my intention of coming

as to-day, lest Mr. Saville should deem it necessary to provide for the short remainder of my journey after quitting the mail, and I considered it both more proper and more delicate that my friend Wildner should perform that office for me, and I am sorry that he should have acted so injudiciously as to have informed her of my intention, and still more that he should have permitted her to accompany him. Such meetings should never take place under the surveillance of those who are uninterested spectators. I should consider even the presence of the servant as an act of indelicacy; not, however, that your cousin betrayed any of that consciousness or confusion which, under the circumstances of the case, I had prepared myself to expect; in fact, I did not expect to find so much self-possession in one so young."

Camilla could scarcely restrain the pleasure she felt: everything had occurred better for her plans than she had dared to hope for; and, as much to conceal the joy that sparkled in her eyes, as to affect a modesty and sorrow which she did not feel, she looked as if counting every thread in the carpet, as she replied—

"I really am very grieved that my cousin should have acted so thoughtlessly. It was very much against my judgment that she went at all,

and especially on Tomboy, who she never had nerve or coolness enough to manage. The horse, no doubt, discovered his advantage, which her relaxed vigilance afforded him. Wildner certainly did not say positively—at least, not in my presence—that he was going to meet you; but I am sure that Eugenia suspected that it was with that object that he invited her to accompany him, else, why was she so eager to go? I have studied your character," continued the false-hearted girl, "and I know that the refinement of your feelings is far greater than that of many women, and that it requires more judgment than most people are aware of, to avoid giving you pain. I am perfectly aware, that when first I knew you, I fell into a similar error to that which I fear my cousin has committed, but I trust that I discovered it in time."

This allusion to her former too evident attachment, instead of disgusting, pleased Arlington, who considered it as a proof that all those feelings had given way to the calmer one of friendship, and that he might now place the most entire reliance upon her: he was flattered, also, by the character she had drawn of him, for the refinement of his feelings—which was the name by which he dignified his fastidious coldness—

was a point on which he particularly prided himself. How easily is a man duped by an artful and designing woman! Had Camilla so willed, she could, no doubt, have broken off the match between her cousin and Arlington. She had already gained so much of his confidence, that she could have led him to act by her dictation. He had, in fact, the most entire reliance on her judgment, and he almost regretted that honour would not permit him to break his engagement to Eugenia, and offer his hand to her cousin.

Oh, that some benevolent little fairy could have whispered into Eugenia's ear that, at that precise moment the offer of his liberty would have been most gladly and gratefully accepted by Arlington.

Honour! did I say that honour forbade his seeking to be released from an engagement which he felt convinced could conduce to the happiness of neither? Oh, how falsely and how irreverently is the sacred word honour used, when it thus induces a man to drag another into the misery of an ill-assorted union. And this is the etiquette of the world. Both Arlington and Eugenia were conscious that they were about to enter into matrimony unblessed by that affection and confidence which can alone render its sometimes

rugged and up-hill path smooth and agreeable, and yet neither of them had the courage, because a false estimate of the laws of honour forbade their avoiding, by one energetic movement, the awful sacrifice.

Camilla was fully conscious of her power over Arlington, but her love for him, which had, in fact, been only the momentary gratification of her vanity, had given place to a deep and passionate desire for revenge. Revenge of what? My readers will perhaps scarcely believe that a girl brought up in a Christian country could foster in her bosom so horrible a feeling against an innocent, unoffending fellow-creature, simply because she herself had the misfortune to be illegitimate, and, consequently, was the usurper of rights properly belonging to her uncle and cousin. Yet so it was, her Italian extraction, and the total want of feminine kindness and principle, with which she had been reared, had augmented what was in the first instance only a feeling of envy, into an insatiable passion, in which Arlington, by his unfortunate preference of her cousin, was doomed to partake.

The arrangement that Camilla was to accompany and take up her abode with them till she married or took possession of Saville Park, which had been re-let for an additional three years, was entered

into between Mr. Saville, Arlington, and Camilla, without Eugenia's wishes or consent being asked. Of this, however, Mr. Saville was ignorant—he was led by Camilla to believe that the proposal had first emanated from her; and, as we have seen, Mr. Saville was too anxious, for reasons of his own, that it should be so, to be as particular in consulting his daughter as he ought, under all the circumstances of the case, to have been. Let it, however, be remembered, that the art of Camilla, and the delicacy of Eugenia, had kept him in total ignorance of the disunion which existed between them.

When Eugenia was informed, she made no objection. Her last hope had failed her, and she was too thoroughly broken in spirit to care what became of her. She was, in fact, rather pleased than otherwise with the arrangement, as it would free her from the close companionship of Arlington, which was what, above all others, she dreaded. She had not the most distant idea of the revengeful feelings by which Camilla was actuated; and, therefore, though she knew by experience that she would prove anything but an agreeable companion to herself; yet she hoped, as Arlington had agreed to, and, indeed, as she understood, had proposed the arrangement, that it would conduce to his comfort and gratification.

When Sophia Wildner was informed that Camilla was to accompany the new married couple, she remonstrated against such an arrangement with every one of the party except Arlington, who she left to her husband. To Camilla, she urged that the companionship of newly married people could never prove agreeable; that they must, of course, be too fully occupied with each other to pay much attention to her, and that she would, consequently, too often find herself *de trop* to be at all pleasant.

“That is my look-out, Mrs. Wildner,” replied Camilla, haughtily; “if I choose to incur the risk of having to entertain myself, I do not know that any one has a right to interfere with it. I have received an invitation to accompany them, and, accordingly, accompany them I shall, in spite of your impertinent interference.”

So rebuked, what could the kind-hearted Sophia do? It grieved her to think how much mischief Camilla might do, in checking any inclination towards confidence, which the first days of marriage are the most likely to produce.

To Eugenia, she pointed out the impolicy, nay, the almost impropriety of admitting a third person into the society of herself and husband,

especially under the peculiar circumstances of the case, when all his attentions *ought* to be devoted exclusively to her; and she would find ample employment in studying how best to please and to gain his confidence.

“It is all very true,” replied Eugenia, despondingly; “but what can I do? It would, I am sure, be considered the height of indelicacy if I were to object to my cousin’s accompanying us; and, besides, as it is Mr. Arlington’s wish that she should do so, I would not make any objection, even if it was still more distasteful to me.”

To Mr. Saville, Sophia urged the loneliness of his own life, if both were to be taken from him at once, but she soon discovered that all her arguments with him were vain; for his dread of the domestic tyranny of Camilla was sufficient to render him wholly blind to the impolicy, nay, almost cruelty, of allowing her to accompany the new married pair, to act as a barrier to their wholesome dependence on each other in the first and most critical days of their future life. But the selfishness of man made Mr. Saville deaf to her argument; and, with a regretful sigh, she found herself forced to leave Eugenia to her fate, hoping for the best, yet dreading the worst that could befall her.

Wildner had no better success with Arlington, who plainly told him that, having already considered the subject, and made up his mind to take Camilla with them, no arguments or persuasions would induce him to alter his plans.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAVE already mentioned that Eugenia had long suspected that Arlington had preferred her cousin to herself: why he had not made her an offer of his hand she could not comprehend, unless, indeed, her cousin's pride had proved an insurmountable barrier: and yet she thought that could hardly be the case, since, if she was not very much mistaken, Camilla was quite as partial to him as he could possibly be to her. These suspicions, at least as far as Camilla's sentiments were concerned, received what appeared to her a most remarkable confirmation; though, for my reader's information, I must inform them that the scene I am about to relate was got up expressly for the purpose of awakening in Eugenia's mind the demon of jealousy.

The day after the marriage had taken place, being detained, for want of horses, at a beauti-

fully situated but solitary inn, Camilla allowed her cousin to find her in the garden bathed in tears; with pretended fondness, and affected agony, she flung herself into the arms of Eugenia, sobbing violently, and apparently in the deepest affliction.

“Oh, Eugenia, my beloved cousin,” she exclaimed, “may you never—in fact, you never can—experience the bitter anguish I am now enduring! You are wedded to a good and fondly attached husband, while I, alas! am suffering the pangs of unrequited affection. You know I loved Arlington, and had reason to flatter myself that my affection was returned. When, however, I discovered that to you he had given his heart, my pride, I thought, was amply sufficient to erase every spark of love on my part, and that I could calmly look on and see him your husband, but alas! I miscalculated my own strength; I knew not the agony I should endure at seeing those caresses bestowed upon another which I had once been accustomed to receive.”

The reader knows how false was this statement, since Arlington never had paid Camilla more than the ordinary attentions of society; but Eugenia, whose thoughts had been otherwise employed, and who had, in fact, left them

as much together as politeness would permit, knew not what use Arlington had made of the opportunities afforded him; she was consequently deceived, and believed every word her false-hearted cousin uttered; but not a spark of jealousy was awakened in her bosom—she only felt inexpressibly grieved, and pitied her cousin from the very bottom of her heart.

“Oh, why, Camilla,” she exclaimed, “did you not tell me this before! I had no suspicion that he had ever paid you the attentions of a lover; that he admired you—for what man could do otherwise—when first we became acquainted, I was quite convinced: but finding that he did not, as far as I could see, continue to pay you any marked attentions, I presumed that you had made him understand that his suit would be rejected, and that he had, in consequence, had the wisdom to withdraw without running the risk of a refusal. Had I for one moment imagined that you really liked him, nothing on earth should have induced me to become his wife; even at the altar’s foot I would have refused him, rather than have been the cause of this bitter anguish to you, my cousin; but now, Camilla, what is it you wish? What can I do? Will you return home to my father? I will make any excuse you like to Mr. Arlington for your leaving us; in the

quiet seclusion of Llangwyn you will recover your peace of mind, and in a few months, perhaps, you will be able to bear to see me the wife of him, whose conduct, I must say, in thus winning your affections, and then leaving you for another—and that other so infinitely your inferior—has not proved him to be the honourable character I took him for."

There was much in this speech calculated to gratify the self-love of Camilla. Had Eugenia had the art to calculate upon this? No; she simply spoke the thoughts of her own exceedingly modest ideas regarding her own beauty and agreeableness. To a certain degree, Camilla felt that she had succeeded, for she saw that she had engendered in Eugenia's mind a distrust of her husband. She had said that he had not proved himself the honourable character she had expected; but then, again, she had failed to rouse any feeling of jealousy: there was nothing to cause Eugenia the pain she desired to have awakened in her bosom. To return to her uncle's house was the very last thing she either wished or intended; she, therefore, replied contemptuously—

"Ah, Eugenia,—Mrs. Arlington, I beg your pardon,—this proves how differently constituted are our minds; you would evidently have shrunk

from this trial. I have braved it, and will brave it still: return to my uncle's house to be pointed at as a love-sick, forsaken damsel! No; if my heart breaks I still will go through with it. You will see the strength of mind of which I am still capable. I did not intend you to have witnessed this burst of feeling, but I am better now; leave me, my cousin, and return to your husband, who is, doubtless, wondering what has become of us both."

Eugenia left her and returned to Arlington. "Where is your cousin?" demanded he, in a tone of evident discontent: for he was far from pleased at being thus left to his own reflections.

"She is walking in the garden," replied Eugenia, gently; "she is not quite well, and wished to be left alone: I, therefore, left her."

"You have done wrong, Mrs. Arlington," exclaimed her husband, in a harsh and imperative tone; "your cousin, Miss Saville, is our guest, and, as such, it is my desire that every attention should be paid her. If she is ill, she ought to have advice; I will myself seek her, and ascertain what is the matter with her."

"She expressed a wish to be left alone," replied Eugenia, who felt the indelicacy of permitting Arlington to intrude himself into her cousin's presence in her present state of mind.

"Of course, if she did not receive that kindness and attention from you which she required," replied Arlington, leaving the room.

"Can it be possible," thought Eugenia, "that he suspects the cause of Camilla's disorder? Yet no! he is too fastidious, too punctilious, to intrude himself into her presence if such was the case."

"You are not well, my dear Miss Saville," said Arlington, as he approached Camilla, who was sauntering leisurely in the garden, thinking over all that had passed between herself and cousin, and calculating how she could best turn it to her own advantage; "and Mrs. Arlington, instead of paying you those little attentions and courtesies which, as our guest, you have a right to expect from her, has left you to wander here by yourself. She ought to have brought you in with her, and persuaded you to take something. Come," and he drew her arm within his own, "let me persuade you to take some warm wine-and-water; you have taken cold, I fear."

Camilla was delighted at this unexpected attention on the part of Arlington, and she allowed him to lead her into the room where Eugenia was standing near the open window, reflecting with far from pleasurable sensations

on the unkindness of Arlington's manner towards her.

"You see I have succeeded in persuading your cousin to come in, Mrs. Arlington," said Arlington, as he entered; "you should have done so. Shut that window instantly; Camilla has evidently taken cold, and must take something warm, and not run the risk of increasing it by being subjected to any more draughts; you are too fond of having the windows open."

Eugenia instantly obeyed the dictatorial mandate of her husband, but remained by the window, waiting irresolutely, not knowing what course of conduct she ought to pursue. This, Arlington, with the peculiar injustice of his present conduct towards her, chose to impute to ill-humour. He perhaps felt that he had not altogether acted rightly towards her in forcing her cousin upon her; he had already reason to suspect that he had made a blunder in so doing, but pride and the egotism of the male character would not allow him to acknowledge himself in the wrong; some one must be in fault, but not himself; neither did he choose to suppose that it was Camilla; it must, therefore, be Eugenia. There are some men who from the moment they marry cease to regard the woman they are united to with any other feeling than a sort of querulous

desire to find fault, and to heap all their blunders upon her head; let her behave how she will, dress how she will, she cannot give satisfaction; at one time she is too gay, it is unbecoming the character of a married woman; at another she is too grave, she is stupid or sulky; now her dress is too girlish, she has forgotten that she should now dress as a matron; at another time it is too old, she is a perfect dowdy, what does he give her money for to dress with if she makes herself such a fright?

It was in this unhappy spirit that Arlington regarded Eugenia. Her gentleness and unobtrusive manners, which he had before so much admired, were now looked upon almost as a fault; he had, in fact, totally mistaken the sort of woman capable of satisfying his somewhat exorbitant demands. She should have been a high-spirited girl, not easily daunted or made unhappy by the changeable temper of her husband; gay and lively when he was in good humour and spirits, but not cast down when he chanced to be in a contrary mood, and withal, contented with a very moderate show of affection; for whatever might in reality be Arlington's feelings towards his wife, outwardly he never evinced the slightest love; and the caresses of which Camilla had spoken, were only such as a brother

or even a friend might have indulged in without any impropriety. But even these, cold and commonplace as they were, Eugenia resolved to forego rather than pain her cousin, who, in truth, she pitied most sincerely. This was not the sentiment Camilla wished to raise in her bosom; she had intended to plant the thorn of jealousy, which she resolved should rankle there till every chance of confidence or affection should be utterly destroyed.

Arlington, as might from his character naturally be expected, took offence at the coldness of Eugenia's conduct towards him, which he imputed to disgust or ill-humour, which she had neither the good sense nor the delicacy to conceal; thus, day after day, for want of even the most distant attempt at confidence, did this ill-assorted pair widen, by their conduct, instead of healing, the breach which separated them. Arlington, perhaps to punish, perhaps only to pique, his wife, transferred all his attentions to Camilla, whose reception of them, though extremely guarded, was far more gratifying to his self-love.

This was exactly as Camilla wished, and more than she had dared to calculate upon. Her plan was to prevent anything like confidence or affection springing up between them. She saw that Arlington's feelings were wounded by his

wife's apparent coldness; and she believed that she knew sufficient of their characters to feel assured, that one from pride and the other from timidity would avoid demanding an explanation. Eugenia, though she often found herself treated as the supernumerary of the party, was yet too unselfish, too generous, to repine at what, though at the sacrifice of her own comfort, was, she believed the means of restoring her cousin's cheerfulness and peace of mind.

Often did Eugenia in secret blame herself for the repugnance which she still felt towards Arlington—a repugnance which she had believed would wear off as soon as she became his wife, and that habit would soon supply the place of that love which she never could feel for him, and that her fond remembrance of another would in time die away, or be supplanted by new ties, new cares, and new affections.

Her hopes were in some measure fulfilled on her arrival in London, by the discovery that for the next few months her life would necessarily be a very active one, for that the work of furnishing their new residence in St. Helen's-place was yet to do.

Two motives had induced Arlington to neglect this most important affair.

First, till she was actually his wife, he had

always felt a doubt whether he should ever succeed in obtaining Eugenia's hand; her acceptance of him had been withheld till the last minute; he knew she had broken her faith to another, in compliance with her father's wishes: but, should that other appear to claim her, would she hesitate to break off her engagement to him, to renew her former troth?—he felt assured she would not; till, therefore, she was actually his wife, he could not be sure of her, and Arlington was not the man to put himself to the expense of furnishing a large and handsomely-proportioned house upon an uncertainty.

His second reason was, that he did not think proper to draw the necessary funds from his business. Though Eugenia would not become entitled to her fortune till she came of age, yet her father, who had for many years lived within his income, had promised to give him on the day of her marriage 5000*l.*; with a part of this money he could furnish his house; and, as he cared not to be taken from his much more interesting mercantile pursuits, why Eugenia and her cousin might, if not too extravagant, gratify their own taste in the selection.

Eugenia, however, soon discovered that in the choice of her furniture she was to be allowed very little voice. Camilla took pleasure in over-

ruling every suggestion of hers; and, whether from the mere spirit of contradiction, or that he really admired Camilla's much more gaudy taste, Arlington invariably coincided with her. This, however, gave Eugenia but little trouble or anxiety, for there was still plenty for her to do with which Camilla cared not to interfere. One of the first families to call upon her, even before the customary "At home!" had been sent, were the Armstrongs. Sophia Wildner, with her usual thoughtful kindness, had written to Mrs. Armstrong, begging that she would afford Eugenia that assistance in the regulation of her household which she felt confident that she would require.

CHAPTER XV.

EXCEPT for the few months which intervened between his mother's death and his own marriage, Mr. Saville had never passed a single day uncheered by female society. He wandered about the house and grounds discontented and unhappy. He almost regretted having allowed Camilla to accompany the new married couple; much as he dreaded her domestic tyranny, even that sank into comparative insignificance before the utter loneliness which he now endured. Something of self-reproach mingled with his feelings of solitude. Arlington's coldness towards Eugenia during the few days which preceded the marriage, now struck him forcibly—brought perhaps to his remembrance by the bitter,—almost passionate tears which his daughter had shed at parting. Much might be allowed for the natural grief incidental to quitting, for the

first time, the home of her childhood, and her sole surviving parent; but even these could scarce account for the words she had uttered as she hung weeping upon his neck.

“ Dear, dear papa, do not drive me from you; let them go without me—I should be happier, far happier with you ! ”

These were strange words for a young bride; and Mr. Saville felt that they must have been dictated by a strong presentiment of evil, perhaps of misery, persecution, and death. Many little incidents and circumstances to which he had been resolutely blind, were now recalled to his remembrance, to make him fear that he had doomed his innocent child to a far from happy fate, and he regretted having refused to listen to Sophia Wildner’s arguments against allowing Camilla to form one of the party.

Arlington’s coldness towards his young bride, too, struck him with redoubled force as he remembered the look of almost triumphant malice which Camilla’s countenance wore as she marked the agony of Eugenia’s parting; he recollects that when first Arlington became acquainted with them, Camilla had tried her utmost to gain him; and the very ease with which she had apparently resigned her claim, made him suspicious that she had some deeper

motives for her conduct; but of the cruel plan of revenge which she had laid to destroy for ever the happiness of Arlington and her cousin, he had not the smallest conception, or he would instantly have started in pursuit of the travellers, and have insisted upon Camilla's returning home with him, or he would, much as he hated London, have accompanied her there, and stayed to watch over the happiness of his child, whose value, now that he had lost her, had become tenfold in his eyes.

It was on the fourth morning after the ceremony had taken place, that as Mr. Saville, absorbed in these far from agreeable reflections, was pacing the terrace walk, a tall, handsome man, mounted on a remarkably fine horse, and accompanied by a servant, in a handsome livery, rode up to the gate. He sprang from his horse, flinging the rein to the groom, and advanced towards Mr. Saville. The tall figure and soldier-like bearing for a moment led Mr. Saville to believe that he beheld Eustace Somerville, and his heart sunk within him at the possibility that all he had heard, that even Lord Stavordale's letter, was a forgery, and that Somerville had come to claim his bride: a second look, however, convinced him that a stranger stood before him.

“I have the honour of addressing Mr. Saville,

I presume?" said he, as he courteously lifted his hat from his head.

His manner, his appearance, and even the tones of his voice, were at once so striking, so noble, and so gentlemanly, that Mr. Saville involuntarily replied with a polite bow, inviting him to enter the house. They were almost opposite to the window of Eugenia's sitting-room, towards which, as if well acquainted with the locality, the stranger walked, as he accepted the invitation. Though somewhat surprised, Mr. Saville followed him: the window was fortunately open, and they entered. The stranger gazed around him with the air of one to whom the room and its decorations were in some measure familiar.

"This is your daughter's morning room," said he; "I trust she is well. I am the bearer of a despatch to her, as well as to yourself, which, I trust, will prove highly satisfactory."

Mr. Saville trembled from head to foot. He instantly felt assured that some fearful revelation, according to the present state of affairs, was about to take place, as he demanded, in surprise, how he came to be so well acquainted with the room, since he did not remember ever to have seen him before.

The stranger smiled.

"My friend and fellow-officer described it to

me so accurately, that I could not be mistaken in its identity. Poor fellow! during the whole of our tedious homeward passage, it was his sole delight to picture to me this house and its inhabitants, but especially this room and its fair mistress, into whose hands I hope you will permit me to deliver the letter with which I am charged;" at the same time he held out to Mr. Saville one directed to himself.

Mr Saville turned deadly pale, and sank into a chair. The letter, which he had mechanically taken, and of which he dared not venture to break the seal, he felt convinced would explain all that had appeared mysterious in Eustace Somerville's conduct, and prove to him that he had hurried his unfortunate child not only into a marriage repugnant to her, but with a man who, on more points than one, would prove utterly unworthy of her. For, at the moment, he was led to suspect that the engagement to his cousin, nay, even the letter, apparently in Lord Stavordale's own hand-writing, was a falsehood and a forgery, got up between Arlington and Camilla for the furtherance of their own plans—what those plans were, he did not even give himself the trouble to imagine. His ideas were so completely bewildered that he could not answer, and the stranger continued.

“ I should have been here nearly a week sooner, but was delayed by an accident, which lamed my horse, so that I could not travel; but as I supposed that a few days delay would not prove of much consequence, I preferred waiting his recovery, to travelling by post.”

Mr. Saville for a moment hid his face in his hands—he was tempted to cry out in the agony of the moment against the decrees of the Almighty, who had thus willed that an accident, in itself apparently trifling and of small consequence, should cause the destruction of his daughter’s happiness. Let us look back for a moment, and trace to how many insignificant and irrelevant events this unhappy marriage had been brought about; but, at the bottom of all, was the want of confidence. A false delicacy had prompted Eustace Somerville to withhold from Eugenia a knowledge of his engagement to his cousin—which engagement, let the sacrifice be what it would, he had resolved never to fulfil. He was not himself in possession of all the facts which had induced his father and uncle to bind, by a mutual promise of marriage, two children of far too tender an age to know their own minds, or to have any conception of the solemn and sacred character of the vows by which they bound themselves.

The delay beyond the two years, named by himself, was wholly out of his power to avoid or prevent; the time for the return of the regiment had been named, but put off from day to day; to write, therefore, was useless, even if he could have entered into any explanation: but that he could not till he had seen his uncle and cousin, and had some conversation on the subject with them. The voyage had been very long and tedious, exceeding nearly by a month the time usually occupied in the transit from India to England. On his arrival, he found his uncle, the earl, so ill, that for some weeks he could not enter on the subject, though a very satisfactory explanation had taken place between himself and cousin.

Had Mr. Saville not been so blind or so determined to persuade his daughter into marrying Arlington, or had even allowed a few weeks delay, all would have been well; and this he now felt, and it grieved him to the very heart to think that to his obstinacy was to be imputed the misery of his beloved child. The delay, as it proved, of but a few days, would have been sufficient, or if the bearer of Eustace Somerville's letters had, instead of waiting for the recovery of his horse, immediately continued his journey, he would have arrived in time to prevent the marriage. As to Arlington's feelings on the subject,

the coldness of his manners led him to suspect that he would have yielded very readily; or, at any rate, that it would not have broken his heart to have lost his young bride. These thoughts rushed with such vehemence through Mr. Saville's mind, that, unable longer to repress his feelings, he burst into tears.

Tears from a man are always painful to behold; but to see a father weeping in bitter anguish for the misery of an only child, and that misery in a great measure caused by his own precipitancy, is indeed heart-rending. The stranger, however, being ignorant of the cause of his tears, very naturally concluded that his daughter was dead.

“Alas!” said he, replying to his own thoughts, “this will indeed be sad news for me to take back with me; it will, I fear, break my poor friend's heart. Now that every obstacle has been so happily removed, to find that she has been thus snatched from him by the grim monster death, is terrible.”

“She is not dead,” sobbed the poor old man, now completely overcome by his feelings; “I could almost wish she were, for I have given her to one who, I fear, is totally unworthy of her; she was married only four days since to Mr. Arlington.”

"To Mr. Arlington! and only four days since!" exclaimed the stranger; "oh, I shall never dare to look my poor friend Eustace in the face again: for to my neglect in not more promptly executing his commission this misfortune may, perhaps, be imputed. The name of Arlington is but too familiar to me; and as I have every reason to believe that my friend Eustace was really beloved, I cannot but think that she has yielded to the persuasions of others, or to circumstances, but not to her own inclinations in thus giving her hand to another, and that other Mr. Arlington, towards whom, Eustace told me, she had quite an antipathy."

"It is too true," replied Mr. Saville; "she was, alas! persuaded against her own inclinations to accept Mr. Arlington, being fully impressed with the belief that Somerville was about to be married to his cousin, the only daughter of the Earl of Stavordale."

"He was so engaged, certainly," replied the officer; "the betrothal had taken place between them while yet children; they were much attached to each other, but not as lovers. They could not, however, be freed from their engagement till the Lady Araminta was of age—this was last August, when, if Eustace had been in England, the business would have been imme-

diately settled, but he did not arrive till the spring, and the state of health in which he found the earl forbade his entering upon the subject till about a fortnight since. The earl was so wedded to the idea of uniting the families by the marriage of his daughter to her cousin, that had I not stepped in to claim the promised hand of the fair lady, I doubt if he would have so readily consented; but my fortune and title being quite equal to his own, he made no objection to the mutual release."

"In August," said Mr. Saville, musingly; "it was, I think, in that month, that I received the letter from the Earl of Stavordale, informing me of the engagement of his nephew to his cousin; but when I told my daughter, she positively refused to listen to Mr. Arlington's addresses till six months had elapsed. I could not guess her motive, but I would not thwart her."

"She was true, then, to her promise," exclaimed the officer. "Eustace said that she had promised to remain single two years, and he felt sure that no persuasions would induce her to listen to the addresses of another till that period had elapsed. Alas, how little either of us thought that—though she kept her promise to the letter, nay, more than to the letter—she

would be lost to him through the delay of a few days; but you have not read your letter."

"Alas! it can tell me nothing but what I know already," replied Mr. Saville, as he almost mechanically broke the seal, and read as follows:--

"A thousand apologies, my ever dear and respected sir, are due to you for my apparently long neglect. Nothing but a full persuasion that I should have been acting dishonourably towards my uncle and cousin prevented my placing both in you and my ever beloved Eugenia, the fullest confidence, ere I took my departure from Llangwyn. I am now, however—thanks, in some measure, to my excellent friend, Lord Glanmore, who is the bearer of this, as well as one also to my fondly beloved Eugenia—perfectly free to make the offer of my hand where my heart has long been devoted. The state of my uncle's health forbids my leaving him for a few days; but I trust the return of my friend Glanmore, will bring me an invitation to your hospitable abode, which I shall hasten on the wings of love to obey.

"Begging to be most kindly remembered to your niece, who, I hope, has long since been made happy in the choice of her heart, and also

to all friends at Llangwyn, who may do me the honour of remembering me,

“ I remain, my dear sir,

Yours most truly,

EUSTACE GRANTLEY SOMERVILLE.

“ P.S.—For all particulars regarding my present fortune and future prospects, I refer you to my friend Glanmore.”

“ Lord Glanmore, I presume?” said Mr. Saville, as he turned towards his visitor, who, while he was reading the letter, was taking a survey of the room, studying, with mournful earnestness, the highly finished pencil-drawings which he knew from Eustace had been the work of his beloved Eugenia; he turned, and bowed in acknowledgment of the name: “ You must stay and partake of my solitary dinner, and accept a bed for yourself, and stabling for your horses, for at least one night: for though, alas! the reason for which I might demand the information is now for ever at an end, yet the interest which I must always feel in Eustace Somerville, makes me curious to know something more concerning him.”

Lord Glanmore accepted the invitation, and while chatting over their wine, gave Mr.

Saville the following particulars of the Stavordale family :—

“ Lord Stavordale, the father of the present earl, like too many of our Irish nobility, though possessing a fine property, lived only for himself, forgetting that there were others to succeed him whose claims were equal to his own. He could not sell, but he so deeply mortgaged, his estates, that when he died his two sons found that unless they followed in the same ruinous career, or married for money, there was scarcely anything for them to live upon. The young earl, unfortunately, partook so largely of the family failings, thoughtlessness and extravagance, that the property was not likely to be much improved under his rule. Added to which, he made, what at the time was considered, a very imprudent marriage; for, instead of choosing an heiress to share his family name and honours, he married a lovely portionless girl, the daughter of a gentleman of good family, but no fortune. She was the beauty of the family, and her parents had calculated upon her making a wealthy marriage, and so helping to provide for her younger brothers and sisters; their disappointment rendered them inexorable to her prayers for a reconciliation, and she died in consequence in giving birth to a daughter, the Lady Araminta, who has inherited

all her mother's loveliness. The earl was broken-hearted at his loss, and, fortunately for the estate, shut himself up for many years, seeing but little company, and if not saving much, at least not increasing the incumbrances on the property.

" The younger brother, whose only patrimony had been a commission in the Guards, had the good sense on the death of his father to sell out of that expensive regiment, and purchase a commission in the 45th Foot; and, while in country quarters, had the good luck to win the affections of an amiable girl, the only child of a retired merchant, whose mercantile career had been so successful, that when he died, Colonel Somerville came into possession, in right of his wife, of between two and three hundred thousand pounds, the whole of which was, however, settled upon the child or children she might have. She did not long survive her father, and died, leaving my poor friend Eustace, then between six and seven years old. Immediately after her death the colonel paid his brother a visit, whom he found living the life of a recluse, with his only child, the Lady Araminta.

" To his care the colonel entrusted his son; and, rejoining his regiment, was killed in one of the first engagements. By his will, a most

extraordinary document by-the-by, he left his son to the guardianship of the earl. He left the whole of the property, in case of his son's death before coming of age, to his brother. The interest, and consequently all the accumulations which might take place during his son's minority, which by the will of his father-in-law were at his disposal, he left as I will presently inform you.

" He commanded that within six months after his death the young cousins should be publicly betrothed to each other, though the boy was only eight, and the girl seven years of age.

" If on coming of age his son should refuse to ratify this engagement, he should not only forfeit the whole of the accumulations of his minority to be devoted to the liquidation of the debts and mortgages on the family estates, but should also settle as a dowry 50,000*l.* on his cousin. This might appear to be a somewhat arbitrary clause, but it was perfectly just, since the family estates were all settled upon the heir male, and would consequently descend to Eustace, while his cousin would have nothing but what the earl, her father, might during his lifetime save for her.

" But perhaps the most extraordinary clause in this will was that which related to the edu-

cation of his son. It commanded that he should be kept in total ignorance of the large property to which he would become entitled on coming of age, but should, on the contrary, be taught to consider himself a dependant on his uncle's bounty. This will, in some measure, account for his silence, since, if he did not fulfil his engagement to his cousin, he believed that it was in his uncle's power to render him a beggar during his lifetime.

“ It was during his sojourn in this part of the country that I became acquainted with the Lady Araminta. A mutual affection sprang up between us, for she had never loved her cousin except in the light of a brother; but my chance of success with the earl was too precarious for me to dare even to breathe the secret of my heart. I was then only a younger brother, with nothing but my profession to depend upon. I was appointed to the same regiment as Eustace Somerville, and we sailed together for India. The close intimacy naturally arising from a long voyage together led to our mutually confiding the secrets of our hearts, and Eustace generously forwarded my suit by always mentioning me in the kindest terms to his cousin, with whom he kept up a regular correspondence, thus keeping

me in her remembrance. But on my arrival in England I found my position in life materially altered. My father and my brother were both dead, and I was, in consequence, become not only in rank, but in fortune, quite equal to the Earl of Stavordale; when, therefore, Eustace announced his determination of demanding a release from his compulsory engagement, there was no impediment to my immediately assuming the character of the Lady Araminta's lover, and in a few weeks I trust to be honoured with a yet dearer title—that of her husband."

Mr. Saville and Lord Glanmore parted, mutually pleased with each other, and yet too grieved at the result of the mission which had brought them together to wish, at present at least, to keep up the acquaintance.

Mr. Saville deemed it advisable to keep strictly secret all that had passed between them.

"It could do no good," argued he, "to let poor Eugenia even suspect that Eustace had remained true to her, as the only hope of her entirely forgetting him lay in her belief of his utter unworthiness."

When Lord Glanmore returned to Stavordale Castle he found his unfortunate friend lying almost at the point of death in a brain fever—

the ill news of which he was the bearer had preceded him; the newspapers had informed him of the marriage, and reduced him to the state in which Lord Glanmore found him. Youth, however, and a naturally good constitution, enabled him to overcome the disease.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT was Camilla's policy to render herself extremely useful to Arlington, and to gain by every means in her power his entire confidence. A circumstance, however, occurred a few weeks after her arrival in London, which proved to her that he had not confided in her as much as she believed he had done.

She was in a small room adjoining the entrance-hall, the door of which was very near the front door, the dining-room being at the back of the mansion; in this room she was accustomed to pass her mornings—it had, in fact, been given up to her as her own private sitting-room. She was lounging on the sofa in all the luxurious enjoyment of a new novel, when a double-knock at the door startled her.

“Who can that possibly be?” muttered she to herself; “it is not Eugenia, for she has only

just gone out with Mrs. Armstrong in her carriage; but it is evidently no one of any consequence," as she glanced towards the window, and, perceiving there was no carriage in waiting, settled herself again comfortably among her cushions. She heard the man-servant open the door; and a female voice, whose tones were far from soft or gentle, demanded—

“Is your mistress at home?”

Martin, a grave and highly-respectable servant, eyed the visitor from head to foot, as he replied slowly, doubting if she had not made a mistake in the house—

“My mistress—Mrs. Frederick Arlington—is not at home, madam!”

“How long will she be out?” continued the inquisitor.

“I really do not know, madam; but, if you please, I can ask Miss Saville.”

“Stupid fellow!” muttered Camilla to herself. “I see I shall be obliged to take those servants in hand, to teach them their duty; my cousin's such an honest fool, that she will not let them say she is out when she is at home, however inconvenient it may be to see visitors; but I must let him know that is not to be a rule with me; I won't be disturbed, especially by people who don't keep a carriage.”

This soliloquy did not, however, prevent her overhearing what was passing in the hall.

"Oh, very well; if Miss Saville is at home, she will do quite as well—at least, I can go in and chat with her till Fred's wife comes in."

"Fred's wife!" reiterated Camilla; "tolerably familiar, I think. I wonder who it can be who has been on such intimate terms with Mr. Arlington; I have never heard him talk of any one with whom he was so very intimate."

Martin had in the meantime shown the visitor up into the drawing-room, and having asked her name, informed Camilla that a lady—Mrs. Selby—wished to see her.

The name, which awakened in Camilla's mind a dim recollection of having heard it before, added to a considerable degree of curiosity, which the familiarity of the "lady" had excited in her bosom, induced her to forego for the present the lecture which she had prepared herself to give Martin, and she immediately ascended to the drawing-room.

Servants everywhere, but London ones especially, are very free in forming their opinions of their masters' or mistresses' guests; perhaps they deem themselves physiognomists, or readers of character at first sight; and in some measure I believe they are, since a person's real character

is often displayed in trifles before a servant, when it is guarded with the most jealous care from the knowledge of their masters or mistresses. Martin was no exception to the general rule; grave and sedate as he was, he often indulged in remarks which it would not always have been pleasant to Arlington or Camilla to have heard.

"Well, that is a very queer one," said he to the cook, as he entered the kitchen; "but I've always remarked that young married couples, especially if either of them come from the country, have a heap of strange people come to visit them at first; when they've been married some little time, they contrive quietly to get quit of such cattle."

Camilla found the visitor busily employed in taking a minute survey of every article of furniture in the spacious and elegantly-furnished apartment; she turned sharply round as Camilla entered the room.

"So, you are Miss Saville," said she, abruptly; "if your cousin is as fine a girl as you are, Fred has shown tolerably good taste, at any rate; and he or she, whichever had the chief ordering of it, have not done amiss in furnishing these rooms. I don't know when I've seen a handsomer set out—certainly, not in England; but,

my gracious me, what lots of money it must have taken! some one must have stumped up pretty considerably, I guess!"

Camilla smiled; the implied compliment to her personal appearance was gratifying to her vanity; she was, besides, an admirer of originality, and the specimen before her was one which she had never before met with.

She motioned to a chair which the servant had set, before he left the room, at a respectful distance from the sofa on which he knew Camilla usually lounged.

"No, thank you, Miss Saville," exclaimed Mrs. Selby; "I want to have a little social chat with you, before your cousin comes in; so, if you please, I shall take this seat beside you on the sofa;" and, suiting the action to the word, she threw herself on the lounge beside Camilla, who, though far from being pleased at the near neighbourhood of her visitor, was yet highly amused at what she considered her eccentricity both of words and manners. "Tell me," continued Mrs. Selby, "what is Fred's wife like? you are not her sister, I understand, so I suppose you are not alike, though I have seen cousins so much alike, that they might be taken for sisters."

"My cousin," replied Camilla, "is in appear-

ance totally different to me. She is tall, certainly, but her complexion is fair, her eyes blue, and her hair light."

"Oh, she's one of those fair, dollish beauties, is she?" returned Mrs. Selby. "I guess, then, as the Americans say she'd the most money: for I know Master Fred always used to admire dark girls. He thought me infinitely handsomer than little Emily, who is as fair as a lily; but though he may have married her for her mopusses, I'll be bound he likes you the best. I hope you are not very cruel to the poor fellow?"

Camilla had not sufficient delicacy to feel the coarseness of this observation; but she wondered in her own mind what sort of intimacy could have subsisted between the fastidious Frederick Arlington, and this abrupt and common-mannered woman: to wonder, and to resolve to be satisfied, were one and the same thing with Camilla Saville.

"You speak of Mr. Arlington," said she, "as if you were, or at least had been very intimate with him; may I ask, have you known him long?"

"I should guess I had," replied Mrs. Selby, with a coarse, chuckling laugh, "seeing that we came off the same stocks, as the sailors say: why, he's my own brother."

Camilla raised her eyebrows with a look of extreme surprise, peculiar to her, and which she could not conceal.

"Your brother," repeated she; "I had not the slightest idea that Mr. Arlington had any relations living."

"Oh, come, Master Fred, that was coming it too strong. Denying your own flesh and blood. But it's just like him. I suppose he's married some little Welsh heiress, whose pedigree is as long as from here to New York, and he's afraid to tell her yet awhile—it's the honey-and-butter month with him—though, by-the-by, I think he's been married more than four weeks a precious deal. I saw his marriage in the newspaper, and I was savage at not having cake and gloves sent me; but I did not think he'd go and deny his own sisters altogether; but lawk-a-daisy me! so it is when folks get a little up in the world,—especially if they chance to marry above themselves,—they find it very convenient to forget who and what their fathers and mothers were before them."

"His sisters!" repeated Camilla, who had caught at the word: "you are not, then, the only sister he has?"

"Lord bless your heart, no," replied Mrs. Selby; "there's little Emily—as big a little goose as

ever lived, and so proper and well-behaved that even Fred—mock-modest and dainty as he is—cannot, for the life of him, find anything to find fault with in her—poor little wretch! So that your cousin, though she may be the very biggest prude in all the world, and as proud as Lucifer, needn't turn up her nose, or scorn to visit Emmy."

"I do not think that Mr. Arlington has ever mentioned to his wife," observed Camilla, "that he has any relations living—certainly not such near ones as sisters, or I should have been sure to have heard of it."

"The more fool he," exclaimed Mrs. Selby: "for it must come out some of these days; some kind friend or other will be sure to tell her, and then if she's a girl of spirit, crikey Billy! but wont she ring such a 'larum about his ears as will make him look about him pretty smart, I guess."

Camilla was becoming interested in the conversation; the idea entered her mind that Arlington's origin must have been very low, for so vulgar a woman as Mrs. Selby to be his sister. She knew the pride of the Saville blood, and knew how angry her uncle would in consequence be, when he discovered to whom he had given his only daughter. She had fancied that Ar-

lington, on every subject except his business, placed the most implicit confidence in her; but she now found how very far she was from attaining what she aimed at—the enviable position of his bosom friend. To what purpose she intended to turn her power she scarcely knew herself, it was certainly not to the advancement of her cousin's and Arlington's happiness; but she resolved to win from her companion all the information on the subject which it was in her power to give. She therefore replied—

“ My cousin is of so quiet and gentle a character, that I think it very probable that, even if she were informed that her husband had two sisters living, she would trouble herself very little about them, and any reason which Mr. Arlington might choose to assign for not introducing them to her, would perfectly satisfy her: this makes it the more extraordinary that he should have deemed it worth his while to conceal a fact, which, as you just now so sensibly remarked, must some day transpire. I do not consider myself in a position to interfere, but I really think my cousin ought to be made acquainted with all her husband's relations; but, perhaps he has reasons for having forbidden you to call upon her.”

That Arlington had good reasons for not

wishing his wife to become acquainted with his sisters—especially if the one now present might be considered as the standard by which to judge of both—Camilla was fully assured; and she believed that, spite of her usual quiet and gentle forbearance, Eugenia would feel keenly the evident slight and want of confidence on the part of her husband which this concealment betrayed. She therefore wished Mrs. Selby to call upon Eugenia, and, in her own vulgar manner and language, elucidate the mystery in which it seemed Arlington chose to enwrap his family history; this would have the double effect of annoying her cousin, and, as she hoped, of inducing her to evince towards her husband a degree of pride and anger of which he believed her incapable.

“Forbidden!” exclaimed Mrs. Selby, with a coarse laugh: “if Fred had dared to forbid me to call upon his wife, that would have been the very reason why I should have come; but he does not even know that I am in England. They sent me off to New York, and thought they had got rid of me nicely; but I wasn’t to be so done. I got sick of America, and thought I would travel, so I have been to France, and Italy, and now I’ve come back to England; but I shan’t stay here long, for you Englishers are too

straight-laced to please me. However, before I went off again I was resolved to see what sort of a girl my brother had married; so here I am. She's devilish long, though, before she comes in, and I'm getting precious hungry: for my stomach is always very qualmish in the morning, and I can't, therefore, eat much breakfast, so do—there's a good soul!—order a sandwich and a glass of wine for me."

Camilla instantly rang the bell, and, in compliance with her guest's demand, ordered refreshments to be brought.

Martin, fully persuaded that the summons was to open the door for the stranger, lingered for a minute or two at the door, and heard Camilla ask the question—

"Do you and your sister reside together?"

To which Mrs. Selby replied—

"Lord love you, no! The little prude would fancy herself contaminated, I believe, if the same roof covered us; and that makes it the more queer that Fred should have kept his wife from seeing her; but he can't do that long, for I suppose that rascally lawyer, Armstrong, and his wife, have called here, and Emmy's for ever with their girls; but when I've had something to eat and dink, I'll tell you all about it."

Here was some information for Martin, which,

as he prepared the wine and sandwiches, he failed not to ruminate upon. "This queer woman," thought he, "seems to be somebody that my young missis knows nothing about, and I guess she's not over respectable, whatever her sister may be. I guess my master, who's a very particular gentleman, won't be best pleased if he hears of this visit. I wonder ought I to tell him or missis; but yet it seems she don't know anything about her, and master's not a gentleman for a servant to speak to, unless he first speaks to him."

Here was again the evil of want of confidence —to a certain degree, there should be confidence between every member of a family. Had Eugenie been informed of the visitor her cousin had received in her absence, the name, as connected with the Wildners, would have struck her, and she would, in consequence, have been upon her guard: or, had Martin told his master, Arlington would have ordered him not to admit her, should she call again.

Scarcely had Martin left the room, after he had placed the refreshments on the table—which he did by Camilla's desire, without handing them to the visitor, so impatient was she to be again left alone with her, that she might hear the promised narrative, when Charlotte, or Mrs. Selby, as we shall still continue to call her, seized

the decanter of sherry, and, nearly filling a tumbler, drank it off.

“Now, I’ll tell you all about it,” said she, resuming her seat beside Camilla. “But only to think of Fred’s keeping so close all about father, and mother, and us, especially when he was love-making; for love’s something like wine, and you know, Miss Saville, there’s an old saying, that, ‘When the wine’s in the wit’s out.’”

Camilla could scarcely forbear smiling, for she thought that Mrs. Selby was in a fair way of proving the truth of the proverb. Never had she seen a woman take, especially in the morning, the quantity of wine that Mrs. Selby had already done, and she almost feared that the effect would rob her of what she was so anxious to be put in possession of—the family history of Arlington. She therefore refrained from making the slightest observation, for she remembered to have heard that half-t tipsy people, like lunatics, are extremely easily offended. Mrs. Selby therefore continued—

“I know that Fred’s not over-fond of talking of his family, of whom, between ourselves, he has no great reason to be proud. But I never thought he’d be so close as to keep it a secret from the girl he was going to make his wife, and, consequently, one of us, as I may say; for isn’t a

man and his wife one, and doesn't she, therefore, belong as much to our family as to her own; but I'll tell you what, Miss Saville, if she doesn't mind and play her cards very cleverly, as he's begun so he'll end; and, as long as she lives, unless it comes to her ears by a side wind, she'll never know anything more of Fred Arlington and his concerns than every Jack Nokes or Tom Styles in the street could tell her; nor, for the matter of that, perhaps not so much: for I believe it's pretty well known who and what we were."

Camilla, perceiving that the wine was beginning to have its usual effect in rendering her visitor garrulous, and resolving not to lose the present opportunity of learning Arlington's private history, and yet fearful that the quantity of wine she had already taken, without eating, might render her incapable of pursuing her narrative, pressed her to take a sandwich.

"I'm not hungry, thank you," replied Mrs. Selby, to the invitation; "but talking makes one deuced thirsty, so I'll take a little wine-and-water;" and, suiting the action to the word she half-filled a tumbler with sherry, and adding a little water, drank it off.

"I'll tell you what it is, Miss Saville," said she, resuming her seat; "my brother, Fred Arlington, is getting up in the world, and so he

thinks it good to sink the old warehouseman; though, for my part, I see nothing to be ashamed of either in him or mother. He was as honest and good a man as ever stepped, and mother was a good and honest woman likewise, though she did help to make the pot boil by taking in washing; and, what's more, Miss Saville, we were all born in lawful wedlock, which is more than every body can say for themselves."

Camilla felt the colour slightly tinge her cheek; her conscience smote her, and, to conceal the momentary perturbation, she rose and took a glass of sherry, and then resumed her seat as if nothing had been said to disturb her equanimity.

The circumstance, however, had not escaped Mrs. Selby's observation. "Was it pride," thought she, "which she was obliged to gulp down, or had she touched upon some tender point?"

As we have already, in a former chapter, given the history of Arlington and his sisters, it is not necessary to reiterate it here.

From the history of her family, she very naturally passed on to her own; and then the name of Selby recalled to Camilla's recollection all that she had heard from Mr. Howell, and she instantly perceived that Wildner's divorced wife stood

before her; but never till this instant had she had the most remote idea that it was Arlington's sister who had thus disgraced herself and family, and she immediately saw that Arlington had good and sufficient reasons for not introducing her to his wife. Still, that need not have prevented his confiding to her what must some day or other come to her knowledge: in fact, it became more imperatively his duty to do so, to guard his wife against the very annoyance to which she was resolved she should be subjected, that of a visit from Mrs. Selby. She, however, had reason to suspect that on the occasion of her visit with Sophia Harding to Mr. Howell's office, Eugenia had heard all Wildner's history, at least, as far as regarded his unhappy marriage; it would therefore be advisable to warn Mrs. Selby, if she wished to see her sister-in-law, not to give her name, lest it should awaken in Eugenia's mind a recollection of where she had heard it, and induce her to refuse to see her. This, without telling Mrs. Selby her reasons, she did. Mrs. Selby, however, suspected so very nearly the truth, that she replied, with a laugh—

“ Ah, yes! I understand. You think the name of Selby might tell tales? I'm wide awake, Miss Saville, so you may depend on it I'll take care; but don't you say a word about my visit

to you to-day; and, above all, take care that that old Jackanapes of a man-servant don't blab to my brother, or he'll be sure to order him not to let me in. Well, I suppose Mrs. Fred arn't coming home till just dinner time, and it won't do for me to let Fred catch me here, so I'll say good-bye;" and, having finished the plate of sandwiches, and drank another tumbler of wine and water, she took her leave.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN she heard the hall door close on her strange visitor, Camilla laughed; it was a laugh of malicious triumph. She had long suspected that there was a mystery attached to Arlington's birth which he did not wish should be elucidated. She had often remarked that he never spoke of a single relative; how was this to be accounted for? The circumstances of her own birth, which were never absent from her mind, induced her to suspect that the same cause for concealment existed in his case; and once she had, with her usual brusquerie, ventured to hint that such was the case. The indignation which he expressed on the occasion, so far from convincing her of the fallacy of her suspicion, had the effect of confirming it on her mind.

Now she knew all, and though she found that her former notion was incorrect, she believed

that the reality, if skilfully managed, was even more likely to cause disunion between Arlington and his wife; but what plan should she pursue? She retired to the front parlour, her own especial sitting-room, where she was sure of not being interrupted, to consider seriously this question. Should she tell Arlington? certainly not; but she might give him a hint that she was acquainted with the lowness of his origin. He would never suspect from whence she gained her information; but, as Eugenia was so intimate with the Armstrongs, he would believe that they had told her, and that she had informed Camilla. This persuasion would, she was sure, make him extremely angry both with the Armstrongs and also with his wife; and she already knew him so well, that she was convinced that the weight of his anger would fall upon her cousin, whose want of discretion in revealing what she must so well know he wished not to become known, would, in his eyes, be an unpardonable fault. Arlington, she well knew, would not put himself into a passion on the occasion, and tell his wife plainly and openly of the error she had committed, but would treat her with more than his usual coldness, would speak to her harshly without giving any reason for so doing, would sulk with her, scarcely noticing her at all, or would

continually throw out sharp hints upon the necessity of people learning to hold their tongues. All which would be perfectly unintelligible to poor Eugenia, who, however, would not have sufficient courage to ask him what she had done to offend him, but would draw more and more within herself; and what had in reality been caused by his own conduct towards her, Arlington would impute to pride and natural coldness, or perhaps to her still cherished love for Eustace Somerville and aversion for him.

She had always hated her cousin, but towards Arlington, as long as she believed that he stood with regard to his birth in the same predicament, she felt more kindly disposed, and she would fain have spared him, if she could have done so without sparing Eugenia also. But she knew that to render one miserable the other must in some measure partake of the annoyance; she calculated that pride, united to the natural coldness of Arlington's disposition, would soon render him not only totally indifferent to his wife, but that he would join with her in rendering her life miserable, by treating her with harshness and neglect. Now, however, that she had discovered that there was no stain on the birth of Arlington, her sympathy was entirely de-

stroyed, and she hated him almost as much as her cousin; but so far from allowing him to discover the alteration which had taken place in her sentiments towards him, she resolved to redouble her attentions; and when, in her cogitations, she thought of the large sum of ready money which was now at her disposal, she considered it an exceedingly bright idea when it struck her that Arlington would be glad of the use of it in his business, and she determined to make him the offer at the earliest opportunity; in the meantime, however, she must provide against Eugenia's receiving any information from Martin regarding the visit she had received. She accordingly rang the bell for him to take away the tray which he had brought with the wine and sandwiches, and while he was removing them, wondering in his own mind at the deficiency apparent in the decanter of sherry, she said to him, carelessly, as if the thought had just entered her mind—

“ I think, Martin, you had better not mention either to Mr. or Mrs. Arlington the name of the lady who called to-day; it will, I think, annoy my cousin that she was not at home to see her, and Mr. Arlington will, I am sure, be quite angry with me for not asking where she is at

present residing, for he does not know of her being in England, but she will most probably call again, and then it will be all right."

Martin bowed in obedience as he left the room, but as he descended the stairs he muttered to himself—

"No, no, Miss Saville, I'm not quite so green as you take me to be; I can see as far into a millstone as any one, and I'm certain that isn't the sort of person either my master or missis would be vexed at not seeing; however, it's no concern of mine, but if she calls upon my missis, if the wine's had up for her, I shall know who's drank all this, because I know my young missis scarcely ever takes any at all, and never in the morning, but I'm not quite so sure about Miss Saville. I don't know how it is, but I fancy somehow that no good will come of that Miss Saville's living with master and missis; she's too fond of master I've a notion, but yet I don't know either, for he is such a very particular gentleman, that I'm sure if he thought she was really fond of him he'd not let her stay in the house, for fear people should set afloat a tale of scandal against him."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. ARMSTRONG, who, whenever Eugenia had occasion to go shopping, kindly accompanied her, to give her young friend the advantage of her longer experience, had, from some observations of Eugenia's, been led to suspect that Arlington kept from his wife's knowledge every iota of his family history. This she considered extremely injudicious, as it was hardly possible that it would for ever remain a secret. Still, though she blamed Arlington, she deemed it improper to interfere with his arrangements; she therefore warned her daughters not to mention Miss Arlington's name before Eugenia, who would, doubtless, be led to make inquiries as to whether she was in any way related to her husband.

Mary, who, like her mother, was of a very quiet, contented disposition, seldom troubling herself to meddle in matters which did not imme-

dately concern her, readily promised obedience. Not so Georgiana, the youngest, with whom Emily Arlington was an especial favourite; she had likewise taken a fancy to Eugenia, though their manners and dispositions were as widely different as can possibly be imagined, Eugenia being mild, gentle, reserved, and somewhat sad; while Georgiana was the gayest of the gay, always singing and dancing, or, if she could find a companion as merry as herself, enjoying a romp. Emily Arlington, though somewhat more sedate than her merry friend, was still of a lively disposition, and was often, therefore, the chosen companion and abettor of Georgiana's schemes of innocent mischief.

"I do not at all approve, mamma," said she, in answer to her mother's advice, that they should not mention Emily's name to Mrs. Arlington, or, if possible, allow them to meet, "of your plan. Poor Mrs. Arlington, I am sure, is not happy. I don't think her cousin either a proper or agreeable companion for her. I am sure dear Emmy would do much better. I never did like Mr. Arlington, he was always so cold and so grave; and now I like him less than ever, for I strongly suspect that he does not behave kindly to that dear, gentle little wife of his."

"Hush, hush, Georgy!" exclaimed her mother;

“you let your tongue, my child, run away with your wit. You are talking at random of what, I am sure, you know nothing: for what foundation can you possibly have for saying that Mr. Arlington does not treat his wife kindly?”

“No pretty young woman like Mrs. Arlington,” replied Georgiana, “would look so subdued, nay, almost frightened, in her husband’s presence, as she does, if he treated her kindly. I have watched her often—for, giddy-pate as you often call me, mamma, I can be quiet and grave sometimes—aye, and think seriously too, though I know that neither you nor papa give me credit for it—and feel really much interested in poor Mrs. Arlington. I have tried to find out, if possible, what makes her so grave; for I am quite sure it is not her natural disposition, and I have seen her turn quite pale if her husband has only looked at her; and that makes me quite sure that he does not treat her as kindly as he ought to do. I like what little I have seen of her very much, and I am convinced if Emmy and I had her with us, we should make quite a different creature of her, and should soon find out what makes her look at her husband and that cousin of hers, who I can’t abide, with such a scared and timid air. I can’t imagine what reason Mr. Arlington can possibly have for not introducing

Emmy to his wife. If that horrid Charlotte was in England, I should not be so much surprised, for, of course, he would not like his wife to be acquainted with her; but happily she is in America, and therefore he needn't be under any fear of her; and, besides, he knows very well that Emmy is too much ashamed of her to talk much about her, and, least of all, to be likely to introduce her to anyone."

"It is all very true, Georgy," replied her mother; "and I agree with you that it is very unwise of Mr. Arlington not to introduce Emily to his wife; she is an amiable and well-conducted young woman, and one of whom no brother need be ashamed; still, we have no right to interfere with his arrangements; if he wished it, he is the proper person to introduce them to each other, and we should deservedly incur blame if we were to do it without his knowledge and sanction."

Georgiana yielded, though very unwillingly, to her mother's arguments; but she so often made Eugenia the subject of discourse, that Emily herself became surprised and uneasy at her brother's conduct in not introducing them to each other.

And what, my reader will ask, could possibly be his motive for so doing? It is a somewhat difficult question to answer. Arlington felt that

he was gradually taking a position in a class of society to which he had not originally belonged; but, till that position was fully achieved, he, as his sister Charlotte had somewhat coarsely expressed it, was very well inclined to sink the old warehouseman; and everything, therefore, which reminded him of his origin, was distasteful to him. In obtaining Mr. Saville's daughter, he was perfectly aware that he had married into a class above his own, and he was of so unconfiding a nature, that he did not consider that, in withholding from his wife all knowledge of his sisters, he was acting most injudiciously. That fact could not be kept very long from her knowledge, and when it did transpire, it must for ever destroy her confidence in him. It is truly said, confidence begets confidence, and certainly want of confidence produces a similar effect. He had not at all a good opinion of his sister Emily: Charlotte had always tried to persuade him that Emily was but one degree removed from an idiot; and her own faulty conduct had engendered a belief that Emily was equally untrustworthy. Of his wife's discretion, he had not the high opinion which her conduct, had he viewed it with unprejudiced eyes, deserved. It had been Camilla's policy to awaken such an idea in his mind, and he had neither the kindness or the

generosity to judge more benevolently or more justly.

“I am afraid,” said Emily one day to her friend, Georgiana, “that my brother is ashamed of me, which is the reason he does not introduce me to my sister-in-law.”

“Ashamed of you, dear Emmy!” replied Georgiana; “that is quite impossible. You are pretty, well educated, and lady-like; what more can he wish for?—no! it is some stupid fancy he has got into his head, which, if I might have my way, I would soon show him the folly of; and my belief is, that he would thank me for so doing—not just at first, perhaps, because I know he is a gentleman who does not like his own plans to be interfered with, and is, besides, very obstinate—but, I am quite sure, in the end he would thank me. That Miss Saville, she is all very well now, and as long as she gives way to him—never contradicting him, as she does his wife—he will continue to like her; but let her fancy herself indispensable to his comfort, and she will soon begin to take liberties, setting up her opinions in opposition to his, and will not only forfeit the favour which she now enjoys, but will become an object of dislike to him.”

“But, perhaps,” said Emily, “it is because

he knows that his wife would not like me; she is, from your description, rather quiet and reserved; perhaps she is proud, and would look down with contempt upon me as her inferior; she might even feel shocked at finding herself so nearly connected by marriage with one whose birth is so far beneath her own."

" You dear little simpleton," exclaimed Georgiana, laughing; " Is she not the wife of your brother? If the pride of birth had been so very strong, as you imagine, in her bosom, of course she would never have married him; and, let me tell you, if every girl when she marries could be sure of having formed, by so doing, no more disagreeable or objectionable connexions than she has, she would have reason to consider herself a very fortunate woman. No, Emmy, be assured it is not from her side that the objection comes; it is either pride, or some foolish fancy, that your precious brother has got into his wise pericranium, but—I beg your pardon, dearest—I know it is high treason to say a word against Mr. Frederick Arlington to you;" and, with mock penitence, the merry girl put her hands together, as if begging forgiveness; but, a moment after, she wound her arms around her companion's neck, and kissed her fondly.

"Never mind, Emmy, love," said she; "I prophecy that a time shall come when you and your sweet sister-in-law shall be on the best possible terms, only mind you are not to love her better than your own Georgy."

CHAPTER XIX.

A FEW mornings after Mrs. Selby's visit, the cousins were sitting together in the dining-room,—Camilla lounging on a sofa, ostensibly employed in reading a book, but in reality more than half asleep, for the weather was very warm,—while Eugenia, more industrious, was at work; when a modest single knock at the street-door startled Camilla. Angry at being awoke, and never allowing an opportunity to escape her of finding fault with her cousin's management of her household, she exclaimed,—

“I wonder, Eugenia, you permit people to knock at the door in that way; none but visitors ought, in fact, to come to the front door at all, they should go to the area-gate; but if they do come, they should only ring. You must tell Martin to order the people to go to the area-gate; but you really are the worst manager of a

household I ever met with;" this was always the conclusion of every speech of Camilla's to her cousin.

Eugenia, whose ignorance of the customs of London gave her cousin considerable advantage over her, yet instantly perceived the total impossibility of laying down such a rule as that proposed by Camilla, as there were classes who would consider the area-gate as derogatory, as the tradespeople would deem the hall-door an impertinent assumption. She, however, made no remark, for she well knew that to argue with her cousin was worse than useless, as it only produced an angry feeling.

The servant entered, and addressing Camilla, said,—

"There is a poor woman, Miss, who wants to see you."

"See me?" exclaimed Camilla, haughtily; "tell her, I am not in the habit of talking to beggars; let her send in her business by you."

The man obeyed, but soon returned, saying—

"She says, Miss, that she cannot send in any message, that her business is of importance, and she must see you herself."

"How tiresome, and how impertinent!" exclaimed Camilla. "Well, show her into my sitting-room." Some curiosity, and a little

gratified vanity, in having any business of importance, induced her to obey the summons more willingly than she otherwise would have done.

Thoughts are of rapid flight; short as was the distance from one room to the other, Camilla had, ere she reached the door, decided upon the line of conduct she should adopt towards her visitor. She doubted not that she was the bearer of a begging petition, and hearing that she was a young lady of large fortune, thought she would prove more liberal than her cousin, who could not be supposed, under existing circumstances, to have the same command of money. "I must not give her anything," thought she, "or I shall have such visitors every day—one will send another. No, I must treat her coldly, and tell her I never give anything to such persons; and then she will tell the others that they will only lose their time in coming to this house."

The object that met her view, on entering the room, was one calculated to excite the compassion of any one whose charitable feelings were not wholly absorbed by selfishness.

Pale, emaciated, and withered, starvation and ill-usage had done the work of time in producing the appearance of age and almost decrepitude.

That she had once been very beautiful could not for a moment be doubted;—the fine oval form of her face; the beautifully chiselled features, which want had rendered yet more acute; the full dark eyes, which, though they had somewhat lost their lustre, yet still beamed from beneath their long fringes and pencilled eyebrows, with perchance a less luminous, but not more interesting expression, were all indications of what, in youth, the *tout-ensemble* must have been.

There was something in her face which instantly recalled to Camilla's mind a dim recollection of the days of her childhood. She paused at the door, awaiting the sound of the stranger's voice, with an idea floating through her mind that the sound of it would supply the link that seemed wanting. But the visitor spoke not; she gazed intently on Camilla, with an air of abstraction, as if her thoughts were wandering to scenes and days long passed away. At length Camilla spoke; her words were few, and chilling; but the voice was sufficient. She tottered forward, and extending her shrivelled arms exclaimed,—

“Mia figliuola, mia carissima Camilla!”

Had time for deliberation been given her, or had she, in fact, suspected that in the wretched being before her she beheld her mother, Camilla

would doubtless have hesitated whether to acknowledge her or not; but nature's voice for one moment prevailed—she threw herself into her mother's arms, murmuring, "*Mia madre, cara mia!*" These were the words she had been accustomed in childhood to use; and they came spontaneously to her lips. She soon, however, recovered her self-possession, and with it her cold and haughty manner.

"What brings you here?" demanded she; "and how did you find me out?"

"What should I come for?" replied Bianca, evasively, "but to see you, my own, my only child—my beautiful, my noble Camilla."

How naturally do those who are about to ask a favour try to propitiate, by the use of flattery! especially, if they have reason to doubt the reception their petition is likely to meet with.

"I heard of you from a fellow-lodger," continued she,—"a Mrs. Selby. You had been kind to her; you had given her wine, which had elevated her spirits, and she could do nought but talk of you. She described you to me, and in your beauty I recognised my own, and felt convinced that she had seen my child, my own Camilla. My heart bounded at the thought of your being so near to me, and the possibility of my once more beholding you, and pressing you to

my heart. I dared to hope that you would rejoice to see her who bore you; her, on whose bosom you had rested, and in whose arms you had so often nestled. Nay, frown not upon me, if you would not break my heart; for much as I longed to gaze upon my child, I would not have ventured into this house had not Venturini urged, nay, commanded me to come; for he said, if she could be so kind and generous to a stranger, what will she not be to you, her mother. We are poor, very poor—nay, almost starving; and he said, ‘Surely your child, who is possessed of such ample wealth, will not let her mother starve when it is in her power to assist her.’ ”

“ This, then, was your motive for seeking me,” exclaimed Camilla, abruptly. She had from the first suspected that her mother had not come merely to gratify her maternal feelings. “ Why have you come to England? Do you not know that, by the laws of this country, the wealth of which you speak is not legally mine, and that if it were known, or even suspected, that I am not what I am believed to be—the legitimate daughter of my father—it would all be wrested from me, and I should be reduced to beggary? Your presence here may be the cause of this misfortune happening to me, for it is the very persons to

whom this house belongs, who would be most benefited by my downfall."

Poor Bianca looked aghast.

"How can this possibly be?" exclaimed she; "could your father be so unjust as to—to—" she scarce knew what she was about to say, and, stopping short, burst into tears.

Camilla, totally unmoved by her mother's emotion, replied, coldly,—

"My father was not unjust; but he died rather suddenly, the secret of my birth was never told to any one, and my uncle, believing my father to have been married to you, recognised my claim as the heiress of his brother's entire property. I will give you money, but it must be on the condition of your instantly quitting London, to return to Italy, and promising never to come near me again."

"And would you, then, Camilla, banish from you for ever the mother who bore you, and who for your sake bore the shame also?—" But, instantly perceiving that no softened feelings were awakened in the haughty girl's bosom, she continued, in an altered tone of voice, and with something of Camilla's own cold and haughty manner, "If it is indeed necessary for your continued possession of the riches bequeathed to you

by your father, that the secret of your birth should not transpire, the more reason is there for my demanding of you a handsome pension to induce me and my husband to hold our tongues."

How often does passion blind a person to their own interests; and, by rendering them obstinately self-willed, induce them to cast from them an opportunity which is never again afforded them. Camilla's anger was roused at being thus, as it were, dictated to by her unfortunate mother, and she replied, sarcastically,—

" Your husband ! ay ! I suppose just as much your husband as my father was. He ought to be a noble fellow, indeed, who could be thought worthy to supplant such a man as Reginald Saville in any woman's affections, but especially in hers who owed everything to him, and who, I doubt not, would, for my sake, have married her, had she not, by her folly, thrown away the chance, by running off with a valet, a servant, a man who stood behind his master's chair. My father loved me, and was so proud of my talents, that if he could, he would gladly have rendered me legitimate; and then I should have been spared the doubt and dread of discovery, in which I now continually live, and which I owe to your guilty folly; and yet you come to me and dare

to ask me to settle a pension on you and your paramour."

The wretched Bianca's eyes kindled with passion, and her tall form seemed to dilate, as she exclaimed, in tones which fell on the ear like the ravings of madness—so hoarse, so unnatural was the sound,—

"Paramour! said you, Camilla?—unsay that word—I am no paramour now. I never was guilty but with one; and deeply, oh, deeply have I been made to expiate that guilt! Marry me, said you? Ay! your proud father would as soon have thought of placing me on the throne of England, as making me his wedded wife, even if it had been in his power to do so; but it was not, for before I came to England I was married to Venturini, and his jealousy of me rendered me so miserable, that at last I could bear it no longer, and consented to return with him to Italy."

Had Camilla given herself time to consider, she would have seen the policy of consenting to her mother's terms. She had ample funds at her command, either to have given her mother a considerable sum of money, or have settled upon her a sufficient pension to have rendered her comfortable for life; but, carried away by her

angry passions, and anxious only to be rid of her mother's presence, she exclaimed, tauntingly,—

“ Go, then, to your lawful husband, and let him maintain you! On me you forfeited all claim, when you left my father's house.”

“ What?” exclaimed her mother; “ forfeited all claim upon a daughter! A mother's claims upon a daughter's exertions never can be forfeited. You are mine, and I could force you to exert the talents you so much boast of for my maintenance: but you are rich, and to whom do you owe those riches but to me? I could as easily have sworn that you were the daughter of Venturini, if I had chosen, and then you must have worked for us; but I thought that as his acknowledged daughter, Mr. Saville would provide handsomely for both of us; and so he would, I doubt not, if I had remained with him till his death; but my husband's jealousy forced me to leave him. You say that you are believed to be the legitimate daughter of Mr. Saville, and that if it was known that you were not, you would lose all the property. I do not understand this.”

“ Nor is it necessary that you should,” replied Camilla, coldly. “ Suffice it that such is the fact. My father died without a will, and, as his

heiress, I inherit the whole of his property; but were it known that I am not legitimate, every farthing would be wrested from me."

In some measure convinced, Bianca replied, more mildly,—

"Is there not one spark of filial affection in your bosom, Camilla? Would you drive your mother from you, to perish in the streets with cold and starvation?"

"I have said that I would give you sufficient money to take you back to Italy. There," and she took from her purse notes to the amount of 20*l.*, "that is enough, I suppose? Now go, and never let me see or hear from you again."

The wretched woman's eyes glistened with pleasure as she eagerly clutched the money; but a moment after her countenance fell, as she said,—

"This will afford us but temporary relief; we are in debt to more than this amount, and cannot leave England till that is paid; besides which, even if it would take us back to Italy, what could we do there? Starve! We may as well stay and starve here: but we cannot go back." And an involuntary shudder shook the attenuated frame of the wretched woman as she remembered that her husband's life was already forfeited to the violated laws of his own country,

from which he had escaped at the moment of the greatest peril.

"I can do nothing more for you," said Camilla, coldly; "but when I hear that you are really about to leave England, I will send you another note to the same amount."

No pleasure animated Bianca's eyes. She evidently considered that this promise would never be fulfilled; for that nothing would induce her husband to leave London, unless she could obtain from her wealthy daughter a sufficient settlement to enable them to live in comparative comfort.

"I will leave you now, Camilla," said she, sadly, "and you will do well to think seriously over all that I have said, and consider whether it will not be better to make your mother comfortable for the rest of her life, than to run the risk of losing all; for when I tell Venturini, I doubt not he will be for carrying his intelligence to the best market; and, if you will not purchase our silence, perhaps he may find others ready and willing to give a good sum for the proofs of your illegitimacy, which would hurl you to disgrace and poverty, and build up their fortune upon your downfall. If you will not, then, give it us for love, give it us for fear."

"Fear! Camilla Saville knows no fear!" replied the proud girl, drawing herself up to her full height.

The mother gazed with evident admiration on her daughter. Her beauty, the courage which animated her, reminded her forcibly of the days of her youth, when she, too, though never so proud and haughty as Camilla, was full of life and spirit; but, after a moment, she shook her head mournfully, for something like a prophetic spirit whispered in her ear that her daughter's courage would, like her own, be subdued and broken.

No such idea, however, entered Camilla's mind; she thought only of ridding herself now, and for ever, of the annoyance of her mother's presence, which too painfully reminded her of what she really was,—that remembrance which embittered every moment of her life.

"What," demanded she, "will be sufficient to enable you, and the man you call your husband, to quit England?"

That the wretched Bianca was not really vicious, may be readily inferred from the indignation which every mention of her husband, as not entitled to that name, awoke in her bosom; again the spirit was roused, and she replied,—

“ Must I again remind you, Camilla, that Venturini is my husband? Though Mr. Saville was your father, and acknowledged you as his daughter, yet I was married to Venturini even before you were born; and he would, nay, wished, to have you baptized as his daughter, and would have acted a father’s part towards you if I would have left Mr. Saville; but I hoped, nay, believed, that it would be for your advantage to remain with him; I did not expect him to acknowledge you as his legitimate daughter, but I knew that he was sufficiently wealthy to leave you a very ample provision without injuring his rightful heirs. He was always a just man, and had he known that I was the wife of Venturini, I am convinced he would not have brought me to England, but would have provided handsomely for us both. Before I left him, I remember he told me that he was saving money for you; how then, was it, that he died without a will to secure that money to you?”

Camilla did not choose to tell her mother that her father had made a will, but that she had destroyed it.

“ I will consult with Venturini, and will let you know what he will require to induce him to continue to keep the secret of your birth,

of which, remember, we can obtain ample proofs."

Camilla, however, would take no warning; she believed that this was only said to intimidate her into giving them what they demanded; and when, therefore, the servant entered the room, in obedience to the bell, to open the door for Bianca, Camilla said to him,—

"Remember, Martin, you have my strict orders never to admit this person again, on any pretence whatever."

Bianca, as she walked towards the door, heard the order; and, turning on the step, she uttered, in a tone of vehemence, and with a menacing gesture, the single word,—

"Beware!"

and left the house, with a manner and aspect so different to that with which she had entered it, that Martin, on descending to the kitchen, declared that he could scarcely believe she was the same woman he had admitted only an hour before.

Harris, who had accompanied her mistress to London, was by no means a favourite of Martin's. She loved too well to boast of the large fortune of her young lady, and her consequent superiority to Mrs. Arlington; while

Martin, who considered Eugenia one of the most kind and agreeable ladies he had ever served, was always ready to quarrel with Harris on this subject, and gladly, therefore, seized this opportunity of saying something to Camilla's dispragement.

CHAPTER XX.

THE likeness between the mother and daughter, which the state of excitement under which Bianca quitted the house rendered still more apparent, struck Martin, and the first time he met Harris, therefore, he said,—

“ I say, Miss Welch, that was rather a queer customer that came to visit your missis to-day. Of course as you are in all her secrets—or would try to persuade us that you are—you can tell us who she is: for it’s quite plain that she’s a near relation? I never saw two people more alike. She’s got a precious deal of devil in her, and no mistake; and so, for that matter, has your young lady, too: they looked, for all the world, like a pair of tiger-cats when they parted. Your Miss don’t seem to be very fond of the other’s company though, by her telling me not, on any account, to let her come in again. There

are queer things in this world; and, somehow, I suspect this woman knows more about Miss Saville than she wishes the world to know: mayhap she was her nurse, and changed the children, so that the rightful Miss Saville is some poor beggar; or is perhaps dead, and this is her own daughter; and she's quite enough like her to be taken for her mother."

"How can you talk such nonsense, *Martin*," exclaimed Harris, indignantly; "why, my missis's mamma, I've heard say, was a foreign lady, and died when she was quite a child."

"Well, and this woman was a foreigner!" was *Martin*'s pertinacious rejoinder; "which makes it all the more likely that she should have been little Miss Saville's nurse, and changed the babbies in the cradle; and if so, this one has no right to all the fine fortune that she's got: and if so be the other one's dead, why then, my missis is the right heiress of Saville Park, that you make such a talk about."

Harris, who, though very willing to take *Camilla*'s part against any other person, was not in her own mind so very well satisfied with her as not sometimes to feel that she might have a kinder and more agreeable mistress; besides which, though she boasted to others that her young lady placed so much confidence in her,

yet she knew that such was not the case; Camilla talked to her, it is true, and often told her the secrets of others, or what she believed they wished should be secrets; but she seldom talked of herself, except to boast of the very high opinion her father entertained of her beauty or talents, or of her wealth, and the fine establishment she would keep at Saville Park. Vainly did Harris try to recollect her having ever even spoken of her mother; but she certainly had, on more than one occasion, spoken of a nurse who used to accompany her in her walks, and who, she said, was almost as proud of her beauty as her father himself. Might not this be the very woman; and might there not be some foundation for Martin's conjectured relationship between them?

And how felt Camilla? Did one touch of remorse or fear wring her proud bosom? No; she only laughed scornfully at the idea of their endeavouring to intimidate her into giving them a pension. Truly had she said that she knew not fear; she was too self-confident, too self-willed and determined to experience such a sensation; and too selfish and cold-hearted for one remorseful feeling to enter her bosom.

Yet, spite of her self-confidence, which taught her to believe that she was never in the wrong,

she had certainly—and a time came when she was forced to acknowledge that she had—acted most unwisely in reproaching, when she ought to have soothed; and in giving grudgingly, when she ought to have purchased by the utmost liberality, her mother's and Venturini's silence.

Though the 20*l.* which Camilla had given her was sufficient, by paying off their most pressing debts, to enable them to live on for some weeks in comparative comfort, yet they felt that it was only a temporary relief. They had agreed to accompany Mrs. Selby back to America, but they could not go without money; and how could they force Camilla into making them the allowance they demanded? The only means appeared to them to be, to obtain from Italy the proofs of her illegitimacy, which, if she would not purchase from them, they must sell to Mr. Saville or Mr. Arlington; the latter they considered the most likely person to give them their price, as from his sister they were led to believe that, money being of the utmost importance to him in his business, he would not scruple on the means of obtaining it.

Camilla had, as regarded money, somewhat the same opinion as Arlington. She had therefore resolved, as a means of obtaining, as she

believed, more power over him, by laying him under considerable obligations to her, to place all her ready money—the accumulations of her years of minority, &c.—in his hands, and she longed for an opportunity of broaching the subject, and making him the offer.

Fortune in this stood her friend, for it so happened that Arlington was at that very time in want of a large sum of money, for the carrying out of a speculation which he was well assured would pay enormously. He gladly, therefore, nay, almost gratefully, accepted her offer, without giving any reason. She begged him not to inform Eugenia, intimating, though very covertly, her fears that she might indiscreetly talk of it, and so lead the world to believe that Arlington must be in difficulties to have so readily accepted the loan, whereas she wished him to consider her the obliged party. So artfully did she manage, that Arlington was quite delighted with her delicacy and good sense, and proportionably the more inclined to believe that Eugenia deserved the character she had given her.

Eugenia was an obedient, but not a fond wife; she feared her husband too much to love him. She was careful to avoid doing anything which she knew that he disapproved, but she never studied his fancies or peculiarities, and, there-

fore, never succeeded in pleasing or surprising him into a good humour; she kept on the even tenour of her way, contenting herself with the reflection, that she did her duty to the best of her ability. His total want of confidence in her had produced a shyness and taciturnity on her side, which led him often to suspect that her silence regarding the common events of the day arose from a desire to conceal something from his knowledge.

Camilla, on the contrary, studied to please him by a hundred little attentions, and always told him, or rather led him to believe that she told him, everything that had occurred in the course of the day; and this was done, not in reality from any wish on her side to give him pleasure, but as a contrast, to render her cousin's timid shyness the more remarkable. She took an early opportunity when Eugenia was absent, to hint, as if by the merest accident, and, in fact, quite unintentionally, that she knew he had sisters living; she, however, pretended instantly to check herself, as if she had been told not to mention the subject; had Eugenia been in the room, the unfeigned surprise which her countenance would undoubtedly have betrayed, would have convinced Arlington, even if she had not, as it was probable she might have, denied all

knowledge of her having such relatives, that it was not from her that Camilla had received her information. Camilla was prepared for such a *contre-temps* by seizing the opportunity of Eugenia's absence from the room; and, as if conscious that she had done wrong, not only checking herself abruptly, but entreating Arlington not to tell her cousin that she had mentioned the subject, the consequence was, of course, exactly what she had calculated upon. Arlington came immediately to the conclusion, that Eugenia had heard all the private history of himself and family from the Armstrongs, and, being wholly indifferent to him, and regardless of his feelings, had instantly communicated her knowledge to her cousin.

When Eugenia returned, though not a word was said to enlighten her as to the cause, she felt that her husband was angry with her. Always cold and uncongenial, there was an abruptness and harshness in his manner of speaking to her which warned her that she had committed some imaginary fault; and ere the evening concluded she had to listen to a long lecture on the shameful indiscretion of wives making the private affairs of their husbands the subject of their discourse. Eugenia, though she felt thoroughly convinced that all Arlington was

saying was aimed at her, was yet so fully conscious of her own innocence, never having heard either from him or any other person a word regarding his family or affairs, and consequently could not have committed the great indiscretion on which he was lecturing, concluded that it was intended more as a warning for her future guidance, than as a reproof for the past. Still, however, it caused her a severe pang, in proving to her the very contemptible opinion which her husband entertained of her discretion. From the hour of her marriage she had hoped that patience and obedience would supply the place of love. She had ventured to believe that Arlington must have loved her, or why else did he marry her? His acquaintance with her had not been of so short a duration as to render him totally ignorant of her character—why, then, if she was so unworthy of even the usual confidence reposed by a husband in his wife, had he sought her, nay, almost forced her to accept him? Too truthful and kind herself to entertain even a thought to the prejudice of another, it never for a moment entered her imagination that to Camilla she was indebted for the coldness and estrangement of Arlington, who, naturally unconfiding, had never demanded

from her an explanation of that which had first shaken his belief in her discretion,—namely, her having so unfortunately accompanied Wildner on the day of his return to Llangwyn. This he had never either forgotten or forgiven; and whenever he fancied that he had any cause to be displeased with her, it was always the first thing remembered against her, and now, owing to the nature of her present imaginary offence, was recalled to his remembrance with redoubled force, confirming the idea which Camilla had taken so much pains to awaken in his mind.

The timid reserve and total want of confidence in herself—which was the chief fault, because carried to excess—of Eugenia's character, withheld her from bringing any subject forward, so as to lead to an explanation; consequently, she never knew what were the causes of Arlington's increasing coldness, taciturnity, and often harshness towards her; and this ignorance led her to impute his estrangement to other sources than the real one. She, in fact, became fully impressed with the belief, that Arlington had too late discovered that her cousin, not herself, was the true object of his affections, and that he consequently regretted quite as much as she did their ill-assorted marriage. Under such cir-

cumstances, what could she do? Nothing. To endeavour, by unremitting attentions, to win her husband's affections, she believed would be worse than useless; her very presence would only continually remind him of the unpleasant fact, that he was bound to her for life; he would suspect that her attentions were intended as a hint to him that nothing but death could release him from her; and he would every day learn to hate her more and more. She sometimes thought that she would propose returning home to her father; but her own delicacy of feeling told her that her cousin could not, with any degree of propriety, remain with Arlington; and she had so completely persuaded herself that her cousin's presence had become necessary to Arlington's happiness, that it would be the height of cruelty to take her away.

What had engendered this erroneous idea in Eugenia's mind was implanted by the line of conduct which Camilla had lately chosen to adopt. She had, to a considerable degree, returned to the habit of paying Arlington those little attentions which all men are so gratified at receiving; and this she did, not because she felt any pleasure in so doing, but simply to impress upon Arlington the contrast between her conduct

and her cousin's, and thus induce him to draw a comparison between them. She hoped, likewise, that Eugenia would imbibe an idea that Arlington had transferred his affections to her, and be, in consequence, tormented by the demon of jealousy. But such a feeling was far from Eugenia's mind; she certainly did fancy that Arlington had too late discovered his mistake, but instead of feeling jealous, she only pitied them both, and blamed herself severely for having yielded her consent at all; for she felt how much happier she would have been with her dear father, at Llangwyn, than she ever could be in London, the closeness and heaviness of whose atmosphere weighed upon her spirits, and was gradually undermining her health.

Arlington saw neither danger nor impropriety in accepting Camilla's attentions. She had constituted him, in some measure, her guardian; and he regarded her as a sister. He had not the slightest suspicion that Eugenia was totally ignorant of the character which, in compliance with Camilla's own wishes, he had assumed towards her. In fact Camilla had, with her usual art, led him to believe that the suggestion of her placing in his hands the large sum of ready money she became entitled to on her coming of

age had, in some measure, emanated from Eugenia; and though circumstances induced him gladly to accept the trust, he was angry with his wife for daring to talk upon a subject so absolutely forbidden as anything connected with money and his affairs.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME weeks had elapsed since Mrs. Selby's visit to Camilla. She had often wondered, and, indeed, felt somewhat annoyed at the delay; for she feared that Arlington had found out that his sister had returned to England, and had forbidden her to call upon his wife; and she was by no means willing that her cousin should be spared the pain which she was sure that the knowledge of having so coarse-minded and indecorous-mannered a person as Mrs. Selby for a sister-in-law would give her. At length, however, one morning, when Martin chanced to be absent, and the housemaid, therefore, had to answer the door, Mrs. Selby called.

Remembering Camilla's caution, she did not give her name,—simply saying that she was “a lady who wished to see Mrs. Frederick Arlington;” and, with this announcement, the servant

opened the door of the dining-room, where Eugenia was sitting alone, pursuing her usual feminine occupation of needlework.

Camilla was in her own room; and having caught a glimpse of Mrs. Selby's figure, and fearing lest Eugenia should summon her to her aid, she quietly slipped up stairs, and having put on her walking-dress, left the house, being determined that Eugenia should have the treat all to herself.

Charlotte, determining to make what she called "an impression," rushed up to Eugenia, and, seizing both her hands, vehemently exclaimed,—

"Well, thank goodness,—at length, my dear sister, I have been able to get to see you; I thought I never should be able to come. I was not in England—as I dare say Fred has told you—when you were married; and when I came back to London I had the misfortune to meet with a severe accident, and was obliged to go down to the sea-side to recover my strength;" and in this she only exaggerated a little, having, in a fit of intoxication, fallen down stairs, and, besides numerous bruises, had received two black eyes, with which she did not choose to make her first appearance before her sister-in-

law, lest they should produce anything but a favourable impression.

Poor Eugenia stood aghast, and evidently bewildered; her first thought was, that her strange visitor was deranged; and, having a sort of instinctive horror of persons labouring under such an affliction, she drew away from her towards the mantelpiece, that she might be near the bell to sound an alarm should the unhappy creature become troublesome.

"You look surprised, my dear sister," exclaimed Charlotte, familiarly; "surely you must have expected me to call upon you long since?"

"I really have not the honour of knowing you," replied Eugenia, cautiously; for, doubting the sanity of her guest, she knew not how far she might venture to contradict her with impunity.

"Honour!—all fiddle-faddle. But the honour of knowing me—ha—ha—ha—that's good!" and Charlotte laughed coarsely. "But you don't mean to say, my pretty sister-in-law, that you have been married these four months, and not yet coaxed, wormed, or worried Fred out of the whole family history about me and Emmy?"

"I do not think the servant gave me your name," replied Eugenia.

"My name—what does that signify?" replied Mrs. Selby. "I tell you, I'm your husband's sister,—and that's enough for you to know!"

"I am not aware that Mr. Arlington has any sisters," said Eugenia, hoping that it might prove all a mistake, and that the visit was not in reality intended for her.

"Not any sister!" exclaimed Charlotte; "what, hasn't he introduced Emmy to you yet?"

Still more and more convinced that there must be some mistake, yet, still afraid of saying anything to exasperate her strange visitor, Eugenia replied gently,—

"Mr. Arlington has not as yet introduced me to any of his relations."

"He hasn't got many to introduce you to, my dear," retorted Mrs. Selby, "so you needn't be frightened on that score—there's only me and Emmy. I don't believe he's got another relation in the world; and, perhaps, as I live chiefly in America, and he don't therefore very often see me, he may, for all I know, have chosen to forget that he has another sister in existence: but why he should not have introduced little Emmy to you, I can't conceive; she's as good and proper-behaved a little soul as ever was born,—and, between you and I and the post, would make you

a much better companion than that half Italian cousin of yours, of whom, as a friend, I'd advise you to beware. There's a little mystery about her, which, if I can, I'll get hold of; but I'm not going to tell you all my suspicions, so you may save yourself the trouble of asking me what I know about her."

As the excitement which had marked her manners on her first entrance gradually subsided, the idea of her being insane was diminished, but that there was some mistake was every moment increased. Might there not be two Frederick Arlingtons? London was a large place, and though she had never met with any other person bearing the name, yet it did not follow that there might not be one, even in the same street—for she knew not any of her neighbours. She was herself of too candid, too truthful a disposition, to believe it possible that any one, but especially a husband, could make a mystery, and keep from the knowledge of his wife so simple a fact. What purpose could it possibly answer? This reasoning convinced her more and more that there must be a mistake; she therefore said,—

"I really think, madam, that you must be in error: the Mr. Arlington, whose wife I am, cannot, I am quite sure, have any sisters, for even if he did not choose me to visit them, he

would undoubtedly have informed me of their existence, if only to guard me from the inconvenience of meeting them unexpectedly."

"And have you, then, my pretty innocent," demanded Charlotte, sneeringly, "found your husband so very communicative upon all other subjects, that you are so very sure that he would not keep anything from your knowledge?"

Eugenia blushed deeply; she felt that Arlington's conduct had been such as to render it more than probable that her visitor was in the right, but then again came the reflection, that no purpose could be answered by the concealment.

Charlotte watched her countenance narrowly, and succeeded in reading her thoughts with tolerable correctness.

"It's all very true," said she, answering what she believed to be Eugenia's thought at the moment, "and it is no longer any use to deny it: Frederick Arlington has made you his wife, but he has not made you his bosom friend. That Italian cousin of yours will, perhaps, try to persuade you, that he has reserved that honourable station for her, but don't you believe her; she's a bad 'un, depend upon it, and the sooner you get rid of her the better. There's something in your countenance that I like, but I can see that you are not happy. Tell me, do you think that

Fred's fond of that cousin of yours, and tells her his secrets, though he keeps them from you?—dismiss the thought at once: depend upon it, you have no cause for jealousy. I'll tell you what it is that makes him so close—it's pride, nothing but a foolish, empty pride—a wish to persuade you, as well as all the world, that he has better blood in his veins than he really has: and yet I see no reason for him to be ashamed of his origin. It is true our father was only a warehouseman, but he was as honest, truth-telling, straightforward a fellow as ever lived, and our mother was also an honest and good woman—let Master Fred look that he leaves as good a name behind him. And then as to little Emmy, Heaven knows he has no reason to be ashamed of her—a better girl never stepped; and as for education and manners, if the Armstrongs think her good enough to be the friend and companion of their daughters, Mr. Frederick Arlington might have been contented to have allowed his wife to visit her: and mark my words, a time will come when he will repent, and bitterly too, that he did not let you have for your companion his own innocent sister, instead of that Miss Saville. Miss Saville, indeed!" and Charlotte sneered; "but I wont tell tales out of school, though I have more than a suspicion on that subject. As for myself,

I say nothing. I know that I have lost my character, and that few husbands would like me to visit their wives; but still the devil's never so black as he's painted. Let Master Fred look at home: what's bred in the bone wont come out of the flesh—let him take care of himself; and that Miss Saville—she'll play him a slippery trick some of these days, and then he'll be sorry he ever let her come into his house."

Poor Eugenia was inexpressibly shocked. She could no longer doubt that the person before her was what she stated herself to be—the sister of Mr. Arlington; and that he considered her a disgrace to him, her own words proved. She was silent and confused, for she knew not what to say. All that Charlotte had said regarding Camilla she believed to have been spoken at random: what could she possibly know about her?

"I say, Eugenia—that's your name, isn't it?" exclaimed Charlotte, abruptly, after a few minutes' silence; "wont you offer me a glass of wine and a sandwich?"

Eugenia instantly rang the bell. She felt that, whatever might be her faults and errors, still, as the sister of her husband, she was entitled to all the little courtesies of life; blushing, therefore, she said,—

"I beg your pardon for not having offered it before, but really the surprise of finding that Mr. Arlington has sisters living has somewhat confused, and, I fear, made me appear forgetful of the duty of hospitality."

"Very prettily spoken, upon my word," laughed Charlotte.

Martin, who, though he had not admitted the visitor, yet, from the housemaid's description, readily guessed who it was, and remembering the deficiency which, on the former occasion, the bottle of sherry and plate of sandwiches had presented, had prepared for the order now given, and, with scarce a minute's delay, returned with a well-furnished tray. With the eagerness of a half-famished person, Charlotte seized upon the sandwiches, and having devoured more than half, filled out a tumbler of sherry, and drank it off, much to Eugenia's horror and amazement.

She hoped that her visitor would now take her leave, but Charlotte had no such intention; and resuming her seat, she said,—

"By the by, I wanted to ask you about the Wildners. You are intimately acquainted with them, are you not?"

Eugenia bowed an assent.

"Well, then, tell me how they are going on.

She's a pretty little dollish thing. Does he make her a tolerably good husband?"

Wondering what such a person as Charlotte evidently was could possibly know of the Wildners, Eugenia replied that they were very happy.

"Where do they live, and have they any children?" demanded Charlotte.

Eugenia replied, "that they lived in Wales, and had now two children, a boy and a girl." But she carefully abstained from mentioning the name or locality of their residence, for she doubted the purpose for which her strange visitor made the inquiry.

Charlotte noticed the omission, and guessing the cause, immediately exclaimed,—

"Oh, you need not be afraid, I have no intention of molesting them; for though Charles Selby—Charles Wildner now—was once my husband, I never cared a farthing for him; and I like the rambling sort of life I now lead far better than if I'd the finest house he could give me. I dare say you've heard all about his first marriage, and how he got rid of his wife—a lucky thing, by the by, for that Miss Harding, for she got a husband by it. And so they've got a couple of brats, have they? Well, I don't envy

them, for I don't like children; they are great plagues, and monstrously in the way; and I never wanted to have any of my own. Well, God knows I wish them no harm; so here's to their very good health." And having finished the sandwiches, and emptied another goblet of sherry, she, very much to poor Eugenia's satisfaction, took her leave.

Bitter are the feelings of a young wife on discovering that her husband's confidence has been totally withheld from her. With whatever feelings she may have married, whether as it ought always to be, he was her first and only love, or whether, as in poor Eugenia's case, she has yielded to the wishes of her friends—a young and amiable woman always resolves, when the ring is placed on her finger, not only to do her duty, but also to love the man she is united to; if love is yet to come, she will learn it, not doubting that his kindness and fond attentions will render the task an easy one; if she loves already, she will cherish it, convinced that every day will strengthen instead of diminishing the feeling.

Eugenia's own disposition was singularly open and confiding; brought up by those from whom she had neither motive nor inclination to conceal either her thoughts or actions, she could not un-

derstand why people should make a mystery of any of the ordinary events of life. Why should they try to make the world believe that their parents held a higher rank in society than they really did? According to her simple logic, if undisgraced by any crime, the poor man left as noble a name to his children as the rich one. If Arlington had been the chosen of her heart, she felt that the circumstance of his father having been a warehouseman would not have made the slightest difference in her estimation of him; and though his sister had disgraced both herself and family, she would only have grieved over it, because she knew that it must annoy him; but she was too liberal-minded to impute any blame to him, unless anything should transpire to prove that he had led her into, or not sufficiently guarded her from temptation; and the other sister, if her own conduct was faultless, ought not to be punished for the errors of another. And to what conclusion did this reasoning bring her? Shall we say that it was an unjust one when she pronounced her husband to be acting contrary to every law of justice and magnanimity; and, from that moment, he sank many degrees in her esteem. Vainly had she tried to teach herself to love him; and the nearest approach which she had been able to arrive at had been

a species of cold esteem, a belief that he was not only an honest, but a just man, in every relation of life; but even of this she now began to feel a doubt, as she asked herself the questions—"Was he acting justly towards his younger sister? Had he acted honestly towards her in thus leading her blindfold into a connexion from which he knew not that every feeling of her heart might not revolt?"

Hitherto she had strictly guarded her every thought from reverting to her former love. Often, when bitter words from Camilla, or unkind ones from her husband, had driven her weeping to her own apartment, she had found the struggle a hard one; and by prayer alone had she been enabled to subdue the thought that would, unbidden, rise, of how much happier she should have been as the wife of Eustace Somerville, even if poverty had been their portion, than as the neglected wife of the comparatively rich Mr. Arlington. But she had reasoned with herself that the fault was chiefly her own; and she had redoubled her efforts to gain the esteem, if not the love, of her husband. But now that she had admitted a doubt of the uprightness of his character, the barrier was cast down, and her thoughts rushed onward like a long pent-up stream, carrying all before it.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT is an old and vulgar saying, that “It never rains but it pours;” and this may be applied in many ways to the events of life. Rarely are suspicions awakened, that some circumstance does not immediately follow, tending to confirm them.

Eugenia having allowed her thoughts once more to rest upon the days of *auld lang syne*, numerous trifles recurred to her remembrance, which led her to suspect that all was not exactly as had been represented to her. Might not his engagement to his cousin have been only conditional—might it not, in fact, have depended upon their mutual liking at a certain period? She remembered the two years which Eustace had so earnestly entreated her to wait for him. She had done so, it was true; nay, she had refused to give her hand to Arlington till some months

beyond that period had elapsed; still she felt that she ought to have delayed placing so insuperable a barrier between them till she was quite sure—till, in fact, she had either seen his marriage announced in the newspapers, or had received a letter from him to the effect that she was free from even the shadow of an engagement.

A few days after, the following paragraph in the paper yet further recalled her thoughts to the so long interdicted subject:—

“The marriage of the Lady Araminta Somerville, which has been delayed by the serious illness of the earl, her father, it is understood, will take place in a few days.”

“With whom was it to take place?” was the very natural question which Eugenia asked herself, and most eagerly did she now read every paragraph under the head of “Fashionable news, or marriages in high life.” At length her search was rewarded, and with what a bounding sensation of the heart she read,—

“The marriage of the Earl of Glenmore with the Lady Araminta Somerville, only daughter of the Earl of Stavordale, was this morning solemnized at Stavordale Castle, by special licence. In consequence of the extremely delicate state of the Earl of Stavordale’s health, the marriage was strictly private. The happy pair started imme-

diately after the ceremony, *en route* for Italy, where, it is understood, they will be joined by the earl and his nephew, Captain Stavordale, who is also in delicate health, having been extremely ill ever since his return from India with his regiment."

Here, then, was proof positive that the engagement of Eustace to his cousin was only conditional, and he was now free; and her heart whispered that had she but been true to herself, and resisted but a few weeks longer, all would have been well. And he had been ill—might not she have been the cause?—some one might have told him of her falsehood;—could she ever forgive herself? No!

The interdict which she had so wisely imposed upon herself once removed, she could not again resume it, and her thoughts became every day more and more occupied with the memory of those days of happiness gone, never to return. Hours would she now sit abstractedly thinking of the past, till every moment of her life became embittered with the consciousness that her happiness was for ever destroyed, and her health suffered under the gnawing sensation of despair.

Fortunately, neither of the paragraphs had attracted either Camilla's or Arlington's observation, or they would readily have guessed the

cause of her absence of mind, and evidently failing health.

The utter want of confidence on the part of her husband, which had been so clearly and so forcibly proved, became to her a subject of satisfaction rather than regret: he could never have loved her; it was not, therefore, necessary for her to affect a feeling towards him which had never warmed her heart.

Arlington, though his own feelings and manners were characterized by a degree of coldness which he mistook for dignity, though he ridiculed those who in public evinced affection for each other, calling them by some term of derisive scorn, yet was far from pleased with the alteration which had taken place in Eugenia. Inconsistency is one of the characteristics of those who fancy that they act from principle, when, in fact, they only follow the inclinations and feelings of the moment. Arlington was too deeply absorbed in his mercantile pursuits to give much thought to his young wife. In bringing Camilla with them, he had studied only his own convenience; though, had he been asked, he would have insisted upon it that it was entirely for the comfort and gratification of Eugenia that he had done so. She was, he knew, a stranger in London, whereas Camilla had passed the greater part of her life

in the metropolis: she then would be able to direct and assist her cousin, and so save him a world of trouble. It chanced that Camilla's taste had, to a considerable degréé, assimilated with his own in the selection of the furniture; it had, therefore, saved him much time and trouble to let her have the chief management, and she had so artfully contrived, that while she had in fact consulted only her own taste, she had persuaded him that she was entirely guided by his; neither had deemed it worth while to consult Eugenia—Camilla intentionally, to wound her feelings, and Arlington, partly from carelessness, but chiefly to save himself trouble. It was not from intentional unkindness, though Eugenia felt it as such, and the blossoms of hope and affection, instead of expanding, shut up their petals yet more closely within her bosom.

His conduct continued to be marked by the same want of vigilance, care, and attention; he could not but see that Eugenia's health was evidently failing; the roses, pale though they were, which once adorned her cheek, had wholly fled, and left behind them nought save a marbly tint, savouring of the tomb: but still, as she made no complaints, he satisfied himself that there was not any cause for alarm; and the languor of her step, and the inertness of her every action, he

imputed more to cold indifference than to ill-health.

The winter and spring had passed away, summer was again come to clothe the earth in her luxurious mantle. Eugenia's thoughts reverted continually to her own now so deeply regretted home. Summer had, from childhood, been to her a season of constant enjoyment. The seeds which she had sown in spring were now rewarding her by putting forth their many-coloured blossoms. The plants which she had tended with almost maternal care through the winter, had now recovered their full vigour and beauty. Every basket of flowers which the itinerant vendors carried past the window, awakened in her bosom thoughts of home, and she often caught herself wondering whether her own especial garden—that into which the window of her sitting-room opened—was as carefully tended, and as rich in gay and odoriferous blossoms as it had been under her care and management.

From her own garden her thoughts would stray to the fields, the woods, the walks which she had most frequented; and often, in her dreams, she again sat beneath a favourite oak-tree in the Cwm wood, on which Eustace had carved their initials, so entwined that few could distinguish or separate the letters, save those who knew for

what they were intended. One dream—it was a painful one—haunted her continually. She fancied that she was sitting with Eustace, as on the day when she took the sketch of the Church of the Seven Pilgrims, on the Cwm rock. Again she heard his voice; again she listened to his vows of constancy, and again she promised to be his, when Arlington invariably appeared, and seizing her, with giant-strength hurled Eustace from the rock, and she saw him sink beneath the rushing eddying water: from such dreams she would awake with a start and suppressed scream, for which, instead of pitying or soothing her, Arlington always reproved her. According to his theory, dreams could only be caused by an overloaded stomach: he therefore, with considerable harshness, commanded her to be more careful in her diet; though, had he taken the pains to watch her in that particular, he would have seen that the little she took was invariably of the simplest description.

Mrs. Armstrong, who really loved Eugenia as a daughter, could not see her evidently failing health without alarm; closely did she question her as to the cause of the languor which oppressed her, and the state of nervous debility to which she was reduced, though often, when questioned, Eugenia would burst into tears, still

she always denied that anything was the matter with her, and she would try to laugh it off as a fancied ailment, for which there was no foundation; but there was something so unnatural in the tone of that laugh, that Mrs. Armstrong shuddered to hear it. So cautiously had Camilla always acted in the presence of the Armstrongs, that, though the daughters, and especially Georgiana, could not bear her, yet they had nothing to bring against her; and, though not very fondly attached to her cousin, they had no reason to suspect her of cruelty, or even unkindness towards her.

To her, therefore, Mrs. Armstrong applied, in the hope, through her, of cautiously awakening Arlington to the danger which evidently threatened Eugenia; but Camilla treated the subject very lightly, and, though she ventured not to Mrs. Armstrong to intimate such a cause for her cousin's illness, yet to Arlington she imputed it wholly to bad temper, not to ill-health; and with this idea, which Camilla had instilled into his mind, Arlington was quite contented, and troubled himself no more upon the subject. Thus had the winter and spring worn away; but when the summer came, and so many of his friends and acquaintance were continually telling him that his wife was evidently dying—

that some hidden disease was sapping the very springs of life, he felt that he could not, without absolute cruelty, content himself with this idea any longer: he therefore asked Camilla, with more earnestness than usual, what was the matter with her cousin.

"Oh, there is nothing the matter with her," replied Camilla, brusquely; "she is out of spirits, that's all; she fancies that London don't agree with her; and you know, dear Arlington, whenever a person takes such an idea in their heads, the idle fancy produces the effect. She does not take as much exercise as she was accustomed to at Llangwyn. She rarely takes a walk, whereas at Llangwyn scarcely a day elapsed without her taking some hours' exercise."

Arlington gladly caught at the suggestion.

"We will try it," said he; and, accordingly, he ordered that dinner should be served an hour later, and he left his counting-house an hour earlier than he had been accustomed, for the purpose of devoting these two hours to the exercise which he was led to believe his wife's health required.

Camilla was loud in her thanks for what she chose to call the sacrifice which Arlington was about to make by this arrangement, but Eugenia said not a word; her feelings had become too

deadened to experience pleasure or gratification in anything, but more especially in that to which she looked forward without the slightest ray of hope. What pleasure could a walk with Arlington and Camilla afford her? They, she knew, would be wholly occupied with each other's conversation, and she, if not absolutely treated as a clog upon their enjoyment, would receive no attention from either.

Arlington was hurt at this silence and apparent indifference on the part of his wife.

Men, however negligent, or even unkind they may have been, always expect that the first act of attention, or symptom of returning affection on their part, should be hailed with smiles of thankfulness, if not with expressions of rapturous delight; but a true-hearted, honest-minded girl cannot affect that which she does not feel.

One lovely afternoon, Arlington arranged to take his fair companions to Kensington Gardens, where the band of the Life Guards were to play. Eugenia was, as usual, calm, quiet, unhopeful. She neither expected pleasure, nor looked for gratification. The crowd, which on such occasions occupied the gardens, destroyed, to her sickly imagination, their entire beauty. But she made no objection, for she was contented to move on with that languid listlessness which betokens the

crushed spirit and heart no longer alive to the passing scene. Camilla was, on the contrary, in high spirits; she anticipated what she loved above all things—admiration. Even amid the crowd of well-dressed and handsome women who were sure to be in the gardens, she felt that her tall majestic figure and commanding beauty could not be disregarded.

Arlington kept no carriage. Camilla had vainly endeavoured to induce him to do so, by offering to pay half the expense;—it was not that he could not have afforded it, but he considered that it would appear presumptuous in the eyes of his mercantile compeers—he knew so well what would be the immediate remark on the Exchange. But too many there were who remembered him the son of Etheridge's warehouseman, and their self-love would be hurt and offended at his thus establishing a claim to move in the same sphere, or one superior to their own.

Whenever, therefore, they were going to any distance, a clarence, with one or a pair of horses, according to the distance, was hired from the neighbouring mews; and in this they drove to Hyde Park, and were set down at the gate leading into the gardens.

Just as they were entering the gate, a tall,

and elegant young man stood aside to allow them to pass. Pale and emaciated, Camilla, though she eyed him with a keen and suspicious glance, did not recognise him—Arlington had not even seen him—but Eugenia who, raised her eyes to thank him by a slight bow for the act of politeness, was instantly struck, as if by an invisible marksman, and would have fallen to the ground, had not the stranger stretched forth his hand to save her.

Hastily beckoning to Martin, who had taken his place beside the driver to wait for their return, Arlington received his fainting wife from the hand of the stranger with a cold and distant bow, leaving him standing in speechless amazement and consternation, while he half-supported, half-carried Eugenia back to the carriage, in which, after assisting Camilla to enter, he also took his place, and ordered the coachman to drive home.

“And so ends the promised pleasure of my day!” exclaimed Camilla, in a discontented and evidently disappointed tone, as if she alone had reason to complain, or as if her cousin’s sudden attack had been assumed simply for her annoyance.

Arlington took no notice of the remark, though its utter selfishness did not escape his observation; and he felt even at the moment

disgusted, though his thoughts were almost wholly engrossed by his wife, whose deathly pallor and spectral form, which had never before been so apparent to him, struck him with a feeling nearly allied to remorse. Conscience whispered that, in allowing her health to become so broken without being attended to, he had acted cruelly and unkindly; and as he gazed upon her faded loveliness, he resolved that an immediate change should take place in his conduct towards her. We shall see how he kept the promise made in a moment of contrition.

END OF VOL. II.

